

*The Land of the
Russian People*

ALEXANDER NAZAROFF



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**The Land
of
The Russian People**

BY
ALEXANDER NAZAROFF

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Contents

CHAPTER	PAGE
I LIFE IN SIBERIA	9
II MOSCOW AND LENINGRAD	25
III FROM KIEV TO SAMARKAND	43
IV HOW RUSSIA CAME TO BE	67
V THE CZARS	87
VI THE EMPERORS	105
VII THE SOVIETS	141
INDEX	162

The illustrations, from photographs, and the map of Russia are grouped in a signature following page 68



CHAPTER ONE

Life in Siberia

AFTER crossing the Pacific Ocean from San Francisco your ship arrives in the port of Vladivostok. You are in a world new to you—in the land of the Russian people, which is known as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, or, briefly, the Soviet Union.

Vladivostok is lovely to look at from the wide and deep bay which your ship has entered. Clusters of white houses mingling with trees are scattered over a wide semicircle of hills which slope down towards the sea. In springtime these hills are covered with a profusion of white, red and violet flowers the like of which one can see in few places of the world. For vegetation is unusually rich here. All around you the bay is teeming with activity. Cranes rattle, loading and unloading ships. Besides ocean liners and freighters and the destroyers of the Soviet Navy riding at anchor, you see a multitude of all sorts of fishing craft busily moving about. Vladivostok is a very important fishing center. The pale, greenish-blue waters off it are very rich in fish, seals and whales. The air over the city always smells of fish, rotting seaweed and tar.

The winding streets which lead from the port uphill are filled with peculiar crowds. Alongside of Russians in workers' overalls or in street clothes you see yellow faces, slanting eyes and national costumes of a great many Chinese, Japanese and other Asiatics. For both China and Japan lie at Vladivostok's doors. You also see tall, fully armed soldiers and officers of the Soviet Army which,

until 1946, used to be called the Red Army. Vladivostok is not only a port and fishing center, but also a very important fortress and naval base. Batteries of mighty guns, underground hangars for war planes, heavy concrete fortifications and pill-boxes are scattered all around the city. But they are dug deep into the ground and hidden so skillfully that, while looking over the country from Vladivostok's hills, one sees nothing but carpets of flowers and woods. Besides, Vladivostok is also Russia's main commercial port on the Pacific shore and a large industrial city.

A Soviet TU-104 jet would take you from Vladivostok to Moscow in nine hours plus connection time. But instead, in order to see the country, you board a train. It will be a long trip. It takes three days to cross the United States by train from New York to San Francisco; but it will take you almost nine days to cross the Soviet Union from Vladivostok to Moscow.

Russian passenger cars are not like ours. Instead of a passage in the middle, they have a corridor on one side and sleeping compartments on the other. At one end of the corridor the car attendant, usually a woman wearing the blue Russian railroad uniform, offers bread and salami or ham and glasses of hot, steaming tea—for Russians usually drink their tea from glasses.

The area around Vladivostok and along the Pacific shore is called the Russian Far East. After clearing it you ride from east to west across Siberia. Siberia in itself is a huge country. During the first four or five days of your trip you ride through woods. The Siberian forests which Russians call *taiga* are famed the world over because they are by far the largest in the world. In no other country is there so immense an area of solid, uninterrupted woodlands as here. About one hundred and fifty miles south of the railroad the taiga ends and prairies begin. But to the north, forests reach out for twelve hundred miles and more, almost to the Arc-

tic Circle. There they pass into the tundra, desolate open spaces and swamps, at places overgrown with low shrubbery, which remain frozen and covered with snow most of the year.

Siberia is a wild and undeveloped country. Huge as it is, its population is small. Only a few more people live in its endless stretches than in the State of New York alone; yet, compared to Siberia, that State is no larger than a two-family house compared to the Empire State Building. It is the mighty Siberian forests that have delayed the country's development, for forests may be an even greater obstacle to man's movements and work than are deserts. Though with difficulty, you can ride in a car or on horseback even through so great a desert as the Sahara in Africa. But neither a car nor a horse will take you through an impenetrable green forest wilderness.

The Trans-Siberian Railroad on which you are riding runs, as it were, in a "corridor" cut through the taiga. It is the main railroad which crosses the entire country from Vladivostok to Western Siberia (where other lines join it). At places that corridor widens. You see peasant villages, log cabins and cultivated land around them. Some of the cleared spaces are so wide that large cities with rich coal mines, factories and industrial plants lie in them. For instance, the city of Novosibirsk has a population of over 890,000, moving-picture theaters, a great many schools, a university and what not; and Khabarovsk counts over 320,000 inhabitants. Yet, all these are but widenings in the corridor opened up in the taiga. As soon as your train pulls out of a city, the great forest, as though advancing against you, closes in on the railroad again. And again you ride for scores of miles seeing nothing but a continuous wall of tree trunks on both sides of the tracks.

The scant population there is in Siberia lives chiefly in cities and villages strung out along the railroad. Some of it lives also along

the banks of the rivers which wind their way through the taiga northward to the Arctic Ocean. You cross these rivers on your way to the west. Some of them—such as the Yenisei, the Ob, the Irtysh—are very long and a mile and a half to two and a half miles wide. Added to the corridor along the railroad, they form natural transverse corridors on which transportation by ship is possible. True, in winter, Siberian rivers freeze for quite a few months. But in summer, as long as they remain open for navigation, steamships plying them have enough time to supply fishermen's, trappers' and gold miners' settlements which lie far to the north with whatever gasoline, tools and foodstuffs they will need for a long winter.

But if you should get off the train and talk to the local people, they would tell you that in the enormous spaces between the railroad and these rivers there are hardly any—or no—human habitations. The mighty and virgin forest wilderness, mysterious and forbidding, reigns there. Only a few trappers' trails, let alone good roads, cut into the fringes of that wilderness. Beyond those trails man's foot has never trod.

Centuries-old spruce, pine, cedar, oak and other trees, often as high as an eight-story building and, some of them, with trunks so thick that no man can embrace them, cover thousands of square miles. Wherever spruce predominates there is no underbrush, and the ground is a carpet of dry needles. In the semidarkness which no sunshine penetrates, one sees only reddish-gray trunks around. The very tops of these trees only are green with boughs and needles which shut the sunlight out. But in cedar and oak forests the underbrush is so heavy that one cannot tear one's way through it.

Some of the taiga grows over thousands of square miles of impassable and treacherous swamps. Treacherous, because man sees

nothing but green moss under his feet, but the moment he steps on it he sinks up to his neck into cold, semiliquid ground, and unless a friend stands nearby, nothing can save him—the swamp sucks him in. In such portions of the taiga billions of painfully stinging mosquitoes and gnats fly in such clouds and attack man with such fury as to drive him insane. Even trappers used to all hardships venture here only with their faces and hands protected by nets.

At other places the taiga towers over hills and mountain chains in which nature has concealed great deposits of coal, iron ore and other ores, gold, silver and platinum. Siberia is immensely rich in such deposits. But for the time being some of them remain not only undeveloped, but also unknown; the forest forbids man's access to them.

On windy days the taiga roars like the surf in the ocean. Indeed, it is an endless and unruly green ocean.

In olden times the fringes of the taiga were infested with bandits who attacked even heavily armed caravans. But if individual criminals escaped into the inaccessible parts of the forest, they seldom came out of it again. Most of them perished in the swamps, were torn by wild beasts, or froze to death in the terrific cold of Siberian winters. Alone, man cannot live in the green wilderness. It is only through collective efforts that men will eventually master it.

But the taiga is a paradise to experienced Siberian trappers who know every existing path in it. It teems with bears, wolves, raccoons, minks, elks, wild boars, red and silver foxes, and with birds of every description which have never seen man. The Russian sable, as flexible as a snake and as alert as a cat, also lives there. That little animal's beautiful, dark brown fur is probably the most rare and expensive fur in the world. And the Far East around

Vladivostok is rich in tigers. Accordingly, a great many Siberians make hunting their profession. Furs brought by them from long winter expeditions into the taiga are sold all over the world. They are worn by many women whom you may see on Fifth Avenue in New York or on the boulevards in Chicago.

In bygone years, Siberian peasants, in the spring, used to set fire to their pastures. New grass for their cattle grew better if the past year's dead grass was thus disposed of. But it was a dangerous practice. Forests often caught fire from the dry grass burning in the clearings. In 1915 that practice was responsible for an especially great—nay, a gigantic—conflagration. It started in central Siberia close to the railroad. Along the railroad all possible measures were taken to check it, and in most places it was checked. But north of the tracks it began rapidly to spread; in the great wilderness there were no people to fight it. And so, it soon extended over an area equal to that of France, Germany and Poland put together. You could fly hundreds of miles in a plane and see nothing but roaring flames. The pall of smoke which hung over the central part of Siberia was so dense that often traffic on the Trans-Siberian Railroad had to be suspended for days on end. In the north that pall reached out into the Arctic Ocean. Whole flights of birds suffocated and fell dead to the ground. And afterwards unnumbered millions of animals were found roasted alive. One could witness unusual spectacles: fleeing from the fire, masses of snakes, squirrels, foxes and other forest dwellers swam across large rivers so that the water literally seemed to boil with them. Other denizens of the forest, such as bears and wolves, came in crowds to the villages from which peasants had managed to ward off the fire; forgetting their mistrust of man they sought security at his side. Only the rains of the fall put an end to the calamity.

The world has never seen a fire of such proportions either before or since. In Siberia, nature does everything on a grand scale.

The Russians who live in Siberia are mostly tall, light-haired, powerfully built men. Used to the rude life and hardships of pioneering, they are tough, brave and adventurous men, too. In the first and second World Wars, the Siberian divisions were among the best in the Russian Army. Both Siberia's past and present account for the peculiarities of her people. Most Siberians are pioneers or sons of pioneers in the same sense as the early settlers of our country were pioneers. In Siberian cities people live in comfort: they have electric lights, gas, busses, newspapers, theatres. But a few miles from the cities pioneering still goes on. In order to break a new acre of virgin soil to culture, peasants have first to clear it of the taiga. If they want to save their pigs and calves from packs of hungry wolves, they often have to spend sleepless nights in bitter Siberian frosts with a shotgun. While sinking a new mine, workers often have to sleep for weeks in the open, in drenching rain and snow, before barracks can be built for them.

Most of Siberia was conquered by Russian czars about three hundred and fifty years ago. Some of the warlike Asiatic tribes which had peopled the banks of Siberian rivers before—the Mongols, the Buryats, the Samoyeds—still live there side by side with the Russians. They are now peaceful peoples, and they are becoming civilized. In olden days, while there were no locomotives, or motors, or excavators, it was impossible even to begin the development of this immense country. In order to increase Siberia's population, the czars banished criminals and political offenders there. Also, some peasants for whom there was not enough land in European Russia were helped to settle in Siberia. But that helped little; Siberia remained a wilderness. About sixty years ago the

Government of the Czars built the Trans-Siberian Railroad. Since then the country began to develop, though at first only slowly.

It is, however, the Soviet Government who has decided to speed up the development of Siberia's immense natural resources, at any cost. From the early thirties on it has been sending there much industrial equipment, machinery and labor. But in order to secure the labor needed, the Soviet Government long resorted to cruel means. Not only did it banish to Siberia political and other offenders on a much larger scale than had ever been done under the czars, but it also compelled them to work as convict laborers—sometimes under extremely difficult conditions. They were overworked, undernourished, eaten up by mosquitoes and treated in an inhuman way. It was thus that new mines, railroads and plants were built in Siberia.

Excavators rattle, and new roads are cutting their way deeper and deeper into the taiga. Huge sawmills have been built in various parts of the country to make the taiga yield its timber to men. South of Novosibirsk, in the region called Kuznetsk Basin, high-grade coal is being mined on a very large scale, and great steel, machine-building and armament plants have sprung into existence. In a very short time that Basin has become one of the important metallurgical regions of the Soviet Union. Far to the north of the Trans-Siberian railroad new developments, such as diamond mines, a mighty hydroelectric power plant, or a shipyard for river craft, keep coming into existence. It is in Siberia, too, that the largest Soviet nuclear plants are believed to be located, though their exact location is, of course, a "military secret." Some of these projects begin to function before roads leading to them have been completed. In such cases machinery and supplies are flown.

In some of these developments life still remains very crude, lacking even primitive comfort. But—or so reliable witnesses tell

us—optimism prevails despite hardships. Like all pioneers, the Siberian pioneers believe that they are building a happier future for their children.

An amazing change has come over the old Siberian cities. Crowded with many newcomers and filled with new life, they have not only greatly expanded, but also become regenerated. Fifty years ago most of these cities were but dirty villages of small log cabins. For instance, Vladivostok where you have landed had a population of only 35,000 and only a few paved streets. It was so poorly lighted and village-like that, at night, tigers often raided its outlying streets and stole cows and pigs. Coal could be mined in the city's very streets and all around it. But there were neither workers nor equipment for mining it, and so it was hauled thousands of miles by rail from European Russia at a very high cost. Now Vladivostok is a modern city which houses some 300,000 people; it counts quite a few industrial plants, and there are a number of busily working coal mines near it.

Entirely new cities have grown up in Siberia, too. Thus, the main center of the Kuznetsk Basin, to which I have already referred, is Stalinsk. Today that city counts over 370,000 inhabitants. But thirty years ago it did not exist at all; its present site was a wilderness. And around Stalinsk other sizable new cities have mushroomed up.

What Siberia badly needs, is more roads and railroads which would cut through the taiga. True, her mighty rivers—the Ob, the Yenisey, the Lena, some of them a few miles wide—are a great help. But they are navigable only 5 or 6 months a year, remaining icebound the rest of the time. Besides, of course, the Soviet Government keeps building new means of transportation. New lines now branch out from the Trans-Siberian to various industrial areas, to the near-by Mongolian Republic, and so on. But in a

virgin land with immense distances road construction is slow and costly. Moreover, in large swampy areas north of the Trans-Siberian, where subsoil stays frozen all year round, road construction presents great engineering difficulties. Yet these difficulties are being overcome. Besides, as you know, there always remains aviation. Consider, for instance, Yakutsk, a city of 100,000 with electric lighting, theaters and a university, lying in an important mining center (gold). During the seven winter months, when temperatures often go down to 75 below, it depends for its contacts with the outside world solely on the plane.

Russians have called Siberia "the America of the future." It has been an apt saying. There was a time when our country was a wilderness like Siberia, and it has taken a great deal of work and time to make it the flourishing and prosperous country it is today. At present Siberia's development has only begun. But the whole of Russia needs the raw materials in which Siberia is so rich, which leads one to believe that her development will continue.

But your train speeds on. Shortly after it has pulled out of Novosibirsk the country around you changes. There are more breaks in the woods. Soon you ride out into endless open spaces—prairies covered with grass which in springtime is very rich in flowers and as tall as, or taller than, a grown man. In these prairies—called in Russian *steppes*—you see increasing numbers of large wheat, rye and potato fields. Russian women with white, red and blue kerchiefs tied around their heads drive tractors or walk behind horse-drawn ploughs. You are in Western Siberia. Land is very fertile, and increasing crops of grain are grown here every year. This part of the country is far more civilized and densely peopled than the great woodlands which you have crossed.

You are approaching the Urals. These are several chains of low, rolling hills and mountains which run from north to south and

are partly overgrown with woods and shrubbery, partly covered with grass. These mountains are one of the richest industrial sections of the Soviet Union. Some of Russia's greatest coal, iron ore, copper and bauxite (aluminum) mines, blast furnaces and open hearths are located in that part of the country. Here life seethes. As your train rides into Chelyabinsk, which is one of the main industrial cities of the Urals, you see on numberless sidetracks no end of flat cars laden with coal, machinery and other goods. Smoke pours out of the high stacks of factory buildings all around. You feel as though you were riding into Pittsburgh. Besides other concerns, Chelyabinsk boasts an enormous and very modern tractor plant. During World War II many of the tanks with which the Russians inflicted heavy defeats on the Nazi invaders came off the assembly lines of that plant. Much of the Russian artillery and some of the war planes today come from various cities in the Urals. And the recently built city of Magnitogorsk in the southern Urals is an even greater metallurgical center than Stalinsk.

So far you have been in the Asiatic part of Russia, for Siberia lies in Asia. But the Urals separate Asia from Europe. After clearing them you find yourself in the European part of the Soviet Union—the part which most Americans have in mind when they think of Russia and Russian history.

Now your train speeds across endless cultivated fields of wheat, rye and oats, past thriving peasant villages. Here and there you see large herds of cattle guarded by mounted shepherd boys. The whole landscape looks much like the flat, grain-producing areas of our Middle West. And the farther west you go, the more often your train stops at stations and passes cities with house roofs, factory buildings and church domes merrily glistening in the sun. At one of such cities—Kuibyshev—you come to the Volga River, the best-known and most famous of Russian rivers.

Russian poets have written no end of beautiful poems about "Mother Volga," as they call it. Who of us has not heard the "Song of the Volga Boatmen"?

As you get off the train at Kuibyshev you see a calm stream, over one mile wide, with many piers, railroad tracks leading to them, and, farther away, beautiful homes and recreation grounds along its banks. Large though the Volga is, it is not quite so large as some of the rivers you have crossed in Siberia, or as are the Mississippi and the Missouri combined. But the Volga is by far the most important Russian river.

You will understand it the moment you see the number of ships docked at the Kuibyshev piers. There are among them large, comfortable passenger ships on which Russian children, workers, Government officials and other city folks go on vacation trips—for the river is very long, and you can sail on it for twelve or more days in one direction. There are also large oil tankers and barges, freighters and fishing craft. Besides, in midstream you see long chains of rafts piled high with wood, with little cabins for the crew built on top or on one side of it. For it is on the Volga that Russians float the wood from the northern provinces of European Russia to the south, where there are few trees to be felled. All of which will show you that the great river lives its own, very busy and active life. Indeed, the existence of millions of Russians depends on it. For it is the most important trade and transportation route in the country.

The Volga is over 2,300 miles long. Some of its tributaries, such as the Oka and the Kama, are also large, navigable rivers. Beginning, as it does, northwest of Moscow, it crosses in the shape of a long, irregular semicircle the great bulk of European Russia and drains into the Caspian Sea. It flows on its long way south through very important areas—through northern woodlands and the great industrial region of Moscow; through the rich and wide farming country

around Kuibyshev; and through the flat and hot Kalmyk semi-deserts which are cattle-breeding lands. Around the port of Astrakhan, near which the Volga drains into the Caspian Sea, there are some of the richest fisheries and canneries in the Soviet Union. It is, incidentally, from here that the Russian caviar comes to our country. And along the western shore of the Caspian Sea lies the Caucasus which is, among other things, the great Russian oil country.

You understand that all of these areas produce different goods. And they exchange those goods by ships sailing on the Volga. Millions of barrels of gasoline and delicious fruit from the warm Caucasus, fish from Astrakhan and cattle from the Kalmyk area go up the Volga to the Moscow region, which lacks these products. Ships heavily laden with grain sail from Kuibyshev both up and down the river. And the Moscow region sends to the south the articles in which it is rich, that is to say, industrial equipment for new factories and other machinery, textile and consumer goods and—as you know—much wood. Thus, Mother Volga is always kept busy. It is not only the most convenient, but also the cheapest route for such traffic. For transportation by boat costs always much less than by train or by truck.

Millions of Russian farmers who live around Kuibyshev are especially dependent on the Volga. In springtime work in the fields begins. Tractors, combines and other agricultural machinery for that work require a lot of gasoline. That gasoline must be brought by Volga tankers from the Caucasus. But the river remains frozen in winter for three or four months. However, a whole fleet of tankers and oil barges gathers at Astrakhan by the middle of March and waits there. No sooner does the ice on the Volga break up and its course clear of the floes, than that fleet rushes up the river and its tributaries and delivers the precious cargo to farmers. How eagerly they wait for it! Indeed, if the

spring has been late in coming and the arrival of tankers has been delayed, it will also delay the ploughing and the sowing of the fields. And every farmer knows that late sowing means poor crops. Nor are farmers the only ones who wait for tankers—hundreds of factories, electric-power plants and other concerns along the Volga need a fresh supply of gasoline quite as badly.

It is the Volga's vital importance to the Russian people that caused Hitler's armies to launch a great assault on Stalingrad in the summer of 1942. Stalingrad is a large city on the Volga between Kuibyshev and Astrakhan. And it is the only point on the river which the Germans could reach from the west. The German plan was clever and it could have proved very deadly to the Russians. The invaders decided to "cut the Volga" by taking Stalingrad. Their bombers and heavy guns placed on the western bank of the river would sink every Russian ship and tanker sailing by. Little or no gasoline from the Caucasus would reach the rest of the Soviet Union. Kuibyshev farmers would be unable to till their fields; that would cause a bad shortage of bread in the Soviet Union, and bread is the Russian's chief diet. A great many war plants would shut down. Worse still, left without gasoline, the Soviet Army's tanks and aviation would be paralyzed. Shipping on the Volga would be brought to a standstill. The exchange of various other goods between the Moscow region and the south would be disrupted also. It would all eventually throw Russia into famine and confusion. As though held by the throat, the country would be halfway strangled. And then it would be easy for the Germans to conquer it.

And so the invaders launched their great offensive. After much severe fighting a powerful Nazi army approached Stalingrad and besieged it. In past centuries, when Mongols and Tartars invaded Russia from the east, Mother Volga had seen a great many battles. But none had been so terrible as the ones she saw in 1942.

Heroic as the Russian resistance had been, the enemy succeeded in fighting his way into some of Stalingrad's streets, which were reduced to smoking ruins by bombs and shells. Moreover, the invaders reached the Volga north of the city and their guns were already planted there. These were weeks of mortal danger for Russia. But the Germans miscalculated. While approaching Stalingrad, their forces, though large, overextended themselves and exposed their flanks. The commanders of the Soviet Army seized the opportunity. They secretly mustered large masses of tanks, infantry and artillery north and south of Stalingrad. And when all preparations had been completed, the Russians struck, and won a smashing victory. The enemy was taken by surprise. The whole enemy army besieging Stalingrad was encircled; those of the invaders who had not fallen in battle eventually surrendered to the Russians.

By this strategy the Russian people were saved. No longer threatened by the invader's guns, tankers, passenger ships and freighters plied again Mother Volga's calm waters and busily performed their useful and vital tasks.

In the past, when there were neither steam nor motor ships, shipping on the Volga presented great difficulties. It was easy to float barges and rafts downstream—the current carried them. But to get heavily laden boats upstream was quite a problem. Even a wide river is relatively narrow, and sails are not half so helpful on it as they are in the ocean. Yet freight was transported upstream on the Volga also in those days. Crowds of special laborers known as *burlaki* slowly walked along the bank of the river towing a heavy barge at the end of a long rope. It was a slow process. It was hard—very hard—work for the *burlaki*, too. Yet such caravans of men walked day in and day out, and the freight ascended the river to its destination. As, straining themselves in cold rain or in

scorching sun, the burlaki walked, they sang; the Russians have always believed that song makes hard work less hard. Among the simple and beautiful songs they had themselves composed and which they sang as they worked was the "Song of the Volga Boatmen."

Unless you wish to stay overnight at Kuibyshev you had better hurry—your train is about to leave. In a day you will be in Moscow.

You are now crossing the industrial region around Moscow. You see an increasing number of cars and trucks speeding on the driveways and on dirt roads which parallel or cross the railroad tracks. Industrial cities and settlements flash by again and again. All kinds of manufactured goods from textiles to electric bulbs and precision instruments are produced here, especially in the area north of the railroad. There is much population in these parts; it is one of the most densely peopled areas of the Soviet Union. You speed, too, across woodlands with much spruce and birch in them. White, gracefully bending trunks of birch trees and their tender foliage are typical of the landscape around Moscow.

Then your train enters a succession of fusing industrial and residential suburbs. Its wheels rattle as it crosses a network of side-tracks. Dirty, decrepit-looking wooden huts are rubbing shoulders with a long factory or storage building; crates are piled up high under a shed. But in the distance, over that ungainly spectacle, you catch glimpses of an irregular skyline of tall buildings, golden church domes and a broken mass of roofs which, as it were, float and melt in the sunny morning mist, mixing with smoke.

A quarter of an hour later your train pulls into a large station thronged with people.

You are in Moscow.

Moscow and Leningrad

MOST Russian automobiles and taxis resemble, on the whole, our American models, minus the "fins." It was, incidentally, with American help that, in the early thirties, the Soviet Government set up its first large automobile plants. Some of the Soviet cars—for instance, the small, compact four-seater *Moskvich* ("Muscovite")—are quite good. But it won't take you long to see that traffic in Moscow is lighter than it is in New York.

You will never forget your first drive through Moscow from the station to the hotel. All foreigners visiting the great Russian capital agree that it is one of the most colorful and beautiful cities in the world. There is so much life and movement, all strange and picturesque, all so different from that to which you have been used in America. Perhaps the most striking thing about Moscow is the variety which it presents. It is like an enormous and richly decorated carpet, a crazy quilt of shapes and colors. It is a city of great contrasts, too: there are hardly two houses in it, or two streets, that are alike.

Some of Moscow's streets are of asphalt, and eight lanes wide. Others are narrow, winding and paved with cobblestone. They look and are ancient. It is in such streets that people lived in the Middle Ages. These streets are not regularly laid out like those of our cities. Some of them wind, twist and then suddenly end in a blind alley, or in a square from which there is no other exit. There is hardly another city in the world where it is as easy to lose one's way. But still more remarkable than the layout of Moscow's streets are its buildings.

As your car drives on, you see huge, streamlined and modern structures, sparkling with solid glass walls, chromium and marble. As a rule, however, they are not very tall, one of the few really tall buildings in Moscow being the new 33-story-high Moscow University, immense, gleaming and quite spectacular. Beside such buildings there may stand a palatial eighteenth-century private home with columns which, before the Revolution of 1917, was the residence of a wealthy nobleman; or a simple wooden two-story house surrounded by a garden behind a fence; or a richly ornamented apartment house of the type they built in Russia sixty or seventy years ago. Perhaps, however, Moscow's most remarkable feature is its churches.

For every now and then, unexpectedly compressed between two modern buildings, or standing by itself in the middle of a little square, you see a church. And how lovely most of these churches are! They are of widely different shapes. Some are white, with simple, straight, excellently proportioned walls. Others are a colorful mass of towers, covered with staircases and ornaments as intricate and graceful as lace made of stone. Unlike our churches, most of them are surmounted by several gilded, onion-shaped cupolas with crosses on the top. Most of the churches in Moscow are at least 250 years old, and many much older. In those days Russians were very pious—a great many of them still are. In giving the shape of an onion to church cupolas, the Russians wanted them to look “like a candle, lit before the image of our Lord.” And they have excellently achieved that effect.

In both wide boulevards and narrow streets automobile and pedestrian traffic is heavy. Busses are packed to capacity, and throngs dive into, and emerge from, subway stations. Many wear workers' clothes. For Moscow is the greatest single industrial city in Russia. In its suburbs, over 200 huge industrial plants, plus in-

numerable small ones, are located. Some of them, such as the giant automobile plant, the ballbearing plant and the oil refinery, are among the largest and best equipped in Europe.

As you look at the throngs in the streets, you see that Russians, for the most part, are tall, blond, blue-eyed people, many of them with wide cheekbones. In Russia, as in any other nation, there are better and less well dressed people. Yet, on the average, the clothes which Russian men and women wear look not half so neat as those worn in our American cities. The Russian crowd looks shabbily dressed. The fact is that until recently there was much poverty in the Soviet Union. Although lately conditions have considerably improved and keep improving, an average Russian still earns much less than an average American. Why it is so, I shall explain later. Meanwhile let it be noted that, in the opinion of some observers, the economic system of "totalitarian socialism," under which the Soviet Union lives, is largely responsible for it.

Moscow is to Russians what Washington and New York combined would be to us. It is the seat of the Soviet Government and the largest business and intellectual center in the Soviet Union. In population, Moscow is not so large as New York. It has about 5,000,000 inhabitants, while our great eastern city counts close to 8,000,000. But the Russian capital occupies a considerably larger area than New York.

Besides being the capital and the main center of the Soviet Union, Moscow is often called "the heart of the Russian railroad system." Indeed, if you look at a map of the Soviet Union you will see that more than a dozen railroad lines and a great system of driveways radiate from Moscow in all directions. No matter which way you travel in the European part of the Soviet Union, north, south, east or west, you almost always have to go through the Russian capital. That has made Moscow the greatest railroad

center in Europe. Every day, 260,000 people ride into and out of it.

A further look at the map will show you another important thing. You will see that most great rivers of European Russia begin in the region around Moscow and, like railroads, radiate from it in different directions. Indeed, you already know that the Volga is born in the Valdai Hills near the great city. Moscow itself lies on the banks of the Moskva River, which, through the Oka, connects with the Volga. Two other great Russian rivers—the Dnieper and the Don—also have their source in the Moscow area and flow south. The former drains into the Black Sea and the latter into the Azov Sea. Finally, some of the tributaries of the Dvina, which carries its waters to the White Sea in the north, have their headwaters likewise near the Soviet capital. Moscow came into existence and has become the great city it is now thanks to the various features just mentioned.

Moscow is now over 800 years old. Historical documents tell us that it existed in the year 1147. Only then it was nothing but a group of tiny peasant villages lost in the woods and called Kuchkovo. At that time, the Russian people did not have one government as they have today. Russia was as yet a small country. And it was all divided into separate regions, each ruled by a prince of its own. The princes often made alliances to fight off their common enemies. But sometimes they also fought among themselves, one trying to conquer the principality of the other.

Around 1147, the Kuchkovo hamlets formed part of the land which belonged to Prince Yury Dolgoruky. Prince Yury was a harsh, but strong, shrewd and farsighted man. His princely seat was at Suzdal, a little city northeast of Moscow. But he visited Kuchkovo on several occasions and took a great liking to it. What he liked about it was that it lay on the banks of the Moskva River

and that so many other great rivers started around it. The Volga plays a great part in the life of the Russian people to this day. The same is true of the big Siberian rivers. But in the times of Prince Yury, when man as yet did not dream of railroads or even of paved roads, rivers were the only convenient trade routes. Prince Yury was farsighted enough to grasp the great advantages which the location of Kuchkovo presented. He caused a strong fortress to be built there on the banks of the Moskva. He built, too, his own house and a few churches, both within and beside that fortress. All these buildings, including the triangular fortress wall, were of wood. Soon, deriving its name from the name of Moskva River, the little city which had thus come into being, became known as Moscow.

Years went by. And they proved what a wise choice Yury had made. Under his grandsons and great-grandsons, little Moscow began rapidly to grow. The space within the walls soon filled out. A whole city of wooden structures sprang into existence outside the walled fortress, and formed a rapidly expanding belt around it. The young city teemed with life and haggling crowds. It became the greatest trading center, not only in Russia, but in all eastern Europe.

Sailing down the rivers in small boats, the Russians went as far as the Caspian Sea, to Persia and India, and also to the rich German commercial cities on the Baltic. They sold to foreign peoples Russian furs, leather, wax, honey and other products which the forests around Moscow supplied. Likewise, Arab, Persian, Chinese, Greek, Italian and German merchants came to Moscow and brought to the Russians silk, brocades, gold, precious stones and works of art. With foreign merchants came foreign artisans and craftsmen. A whole section of the city where these foreigners stopped, received—and bears to this day—the name of *Kitai-gorod*,

which means China Town. Built of wood, as it was, Moscow often burned. Terrific fires turned entire sections of it into smouldering ashes in those early days. But the Russians always managed to rebuild it with amazing speed—and the city grew further.

By the sixteenth century Moscow had become as great a city as was Paris in France. It counted over 200,000 inhabitants. At that time, when all European cities were relatively small, that was a very large population. Yury's descendants, the princes of Moscow, became by far the richest and strongest of all Russian princes. Unable to struggle against the ruling prince of Moscow, some of the other Russian princes eventually entered his service and placed their principalities under his rule. Others, who refused to recognize his authority, were conquered. It was so that, as Russian historians say, Moscow gradually "gathered Russias together." Its ruling prince began to style himself "Czar." That word comes from the Latin word *Cæsar*, meaning emperor, or sovereign. Thus, out of a multitude of small principalities, there emerged one strong, large state, the Czardom of Moscow, ruled by one man. Other European peoples called it Muscovia.

But let us resume our drive through Moscow. Part of the way, your cab rolls along Moskva River, which makes two large loops within the city. One admires the excellent granite embankment. Ships and barges sail by. Though not very wide, the river is quite deep. Then, still following the embankment, you reach a place from which a picture of unusual beauty opens up.

On the opposite bank of the Moskva you see a mighty saw-toothed fortress wall of dark granite topped with many massive towers. Most of them are square, but some round. Behind that wall rise the roofs of beautiful, oddly shaped palaces and the cupolas of many churches. These buildings, towering over the

wall, are so rich in shape and color that they look like a bouquet of exotic flowers made of stone which burst out of the dark granite band holding them together. A great triangular part of the city is enclosed by that wall, which is about two miles long. This part is called the Kremlin.

The word Kremlin, or as the Russians say, *Kreml*, is of Tartar origin, and means fortress. The mighty wall, twelve feet deep, of the Kremlin stands in the very center of Moscow, exactly where the original wooden wall, erected over 800 years ago by Yury, stood. Wood had been replaced by granite at the end of the fifteenth century. The fortress, as you see it now, is over 450 years old. The palaces, irregularly crowded within the Kremlin, are one more striking than another. Some are small, very old and of such exquisite proportions and workmanship that they look like Oriental jewel boxes or pictures out of a fairy tale. Others are large, more modern and also very impressive. The churches interspersed among them are, likewise, of rare beauty and variety.

Historically speaking, the Kremlin is by far the most important spot in all of the Soviet Union. It is truly the shrine of Russian history. For centuries Russia's princes and czars lived in these palaces, and made Russia's history from behind the Kremlin wall. It is from the Kremlin that, more than 400 years ago, Czar Ivan the Terrible, clad in robes sparkling with gold and diamonds, ruled over his Czardom with an iron hand. He was a very talented and brilliant, but also a sad and a very cruel czar. You can still see his magnificently decorated rooms almost exactly as they were in his days. Indeed, the Kremlin palaces have seen great deeds and many great crimes. Many a great and mysterious tragedy has been enacted in them.

Now there are no more czars in the land of the Russian people. But that land is still ruled from the Kremlin. In its larger palaces

are located various offices of the Soviet Government. It is here, in the famed St. George's Hall of the Great Kremlin Palace, that the so-called Supreme Soviet, which corresponds to our Congress, convenes and makes the laws by which the Russian people are governed. It is in the Kremlin that the President of the Soviet Union receives the ambassadors of foreign countries in formal audiences. Thus, the Kremlin holds the same place in the political life of the Russian people as the White House and Capitol Hill at Washington, D. C., hold in our life. At night large red stars flash from the pointed roofs of the Kremlin towers; on national Soviet anniversaries the whole Kremlin is brilliantly illuminated and floodlighted.

Outside one part of the Kremlin wall lies an open place called the Red Square. It is almost as important historically as the Kremlin itself. At one end of it stands the Church of St. Basil. While Moscow has many beautiful churches, St. Basil may justly be called its marvel of marvels. Those who have not seen it before stand literally openmouthed before it. It is magic and madness. Its nine towers surmounted by nine cupolas, each different from the other, are a flamboyant riot of spiraled, twisted and chequered designs, of tinted, enameled tiles, and of decorative stone-lace that leaves you dazed. And yet, in that whirling mass of stone and color there is striking harmony.

There is an idea in it, too, a definite plan. Czar Ivan the Terrible caused it to be built after "the gathering" of the separate Russian principalities into the one great Czardom of Moscow had been completed. Together with Russians, other races, such as Finns, Tartars, and Lithuanians, were already absorbed into that Czardom. The message which the builders of St. Basil wanted to express was that all of the Russians, formerly of the different principalities, and nationalities, now formed *one* nation and, in the great variety of

their habits, ways and tongues, worshiped but *one* God, *one* Supreme Master.

In the Red Square, close to the Kremlin wall, stands another remarkable structure, though of an entirely different kind. It is a well-proportioned edifice of cubic form, with massive steps at its foundation. Made of polished, dark red stone, it is smooth, streamlined and very modern. This is the tomb of Lenin. Lenin was the main leader of the Russian Revolution of 1917, and the founder of the Soviet Government. He died in 1924, and his embalmed body rests in that tomb. But the entire Soviet Union is governed to this day in accordance with his ideas. To the members of the Soviet Government and to the ruling Communist Party, his tomb is as much of a shrine as the Church of St. Basil was to the Muskovites of the time of Ivan the Terrible. Thus, two great symbols, one of the old Russia and the other of the modern, present-day Soviet Union, both stand in the Red Square, separated by but a short distance.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Red Square was Moscow's great bazaar, or market place. Crowds of Muskovites spent a large part of their day here. Most of the square was packed with little tents and wooden cabins of traders. The ground in the narrow passages between the rows of these cabins was covered with logs sunk in the mud, one close beside another. These wooden pavements were meant to keep the mud out, but it oozed up in many places between the logs just the same. From sunrise to sundown, these passages thronged with loudly talking, gesticulating Muskovites. All sorts of business, big and small, was made here. One could buy anything from horses, cows and carriages, furs, boots, to fresh fish from the Volga, or exquisite jewelry from far-off India. Here a Chinaman bowed politely, offering his silks. There, in a row of open-air barbershops, the Muskovites' overgrown hair and

beards were trimmed. The log pavement in that part of the square was covered with so dense a layer of hair, which no one had ever bothered to sweep, that one walked on it as on a mattress. Each vendor, offering his merchandise, tried to shout his competitors and pulled prospective customers by their coattails into his tent. And, while bargaining, each customer tried to shout each vendor.

But the Red Square was more than a bazaar. Near the Kremlin wall, in a part of the square kept free of traders' stalls, there was a place where criminals were beheaded. There were days when one could see men in red, military uniforms armed with halberds and swords, lead a miserable, fettered figure to the fatal spot. In the course of centuries, many a human head has fallen here. It was in the Red Square, too, that the Czar's heralds announced to the people important political events, such as the beginning of a war, a birth in the Czar's family, and the like. Gathering in groups, traders, customers and passers-by discussed these announcements and, also, various rumors which seeped in here from the Kremlin. Thus, the square was also a sort of a huge political club for the Muscovites. And if riots, revolts or uprisings broke out among the people, they usually started in the Red Square.

Today the Red Square is filled with a different kind of life. Automobiles speed busily on its smooth surface in all directions. Various officials, with briefcases under their arms, hurry in and out of the gates in the Kremlin wall.

The square still remains the center of Moscow's public life. All great public demonstrations take place in it. Here hundreds of thousands of Moscow workers, with banners, signs and bands parade on May Day. May Day is a great national holiday in the Soviet Union. Young men and women in white shorts, and with various insignia, who take part in the many sports contests, or in the Olym-

pic Games, march through the Red Square. Here, too, the Soviet Army holds its parades. They are quite spectacular. Closely packed ranks of infantry, marching like one man; mounted regiments of Cossacks and mountaineers from the Caucasus in picturesque uniforms; long columns of tanks, light and heavy artillery and clouds of war planes in the sky!

While in Moscow you may decide to visit Leningrad. To get there will take you only a night on the train. And it is certainly worth your while, for Leningrad is the second greatest city in the Soviet Union, with a population of over 3,000,000. It lies north of Moscow on the Gulf of Finland, an arm of the Baltic Sea. And for 200 years—from 1714 to 1917—the seat of the Russian Government was in this city, not in Moscow.

Unlike Moscow, Leningrad is a relatively young city. It is even younger than New York. It was founded in 1703 by Czar Peter the Great, and was first called St. Petersburg, or Petersburg, after its founder. From 1914 to 1924 it was called Petrograd; then it was renamed Leningrad, in honor of the famous Soviet leader. It is almost as important an industrial center as Moscow. There is no end of great and small factories and plants in its suburbs. Besides, it is a great Soviet seaport. But above all it is one of Russia's greatest intellectual centers. Suffice it to say that it counts over 40 institutions of higher learning alone.

Leningrad is remarkably beautiful, but in a way entirely unlike Moscow. You will find nothing of the labyrinths of Moscow's winding streets and blind alleys here. Leningrad's streets and avenues are straight, wide and almost as regularly laid out as those of New York. Nor is there anything of that Oriental, or ancient Russian touch about Leningrad which so fascinates visitors to Moscow. This great Baltic city is thoroughly Western European in type.

Some of its blocks are much like those of Paris or of Stockholm. While Moscow is quaint, and, as it were, smiling, Leningrad looks cold and formal.

The wide Neva River flows through Leningrad. Within the city, before draining into the sea, it splits into several branches, thus forming islands on which part of Leningrad lies. Besides, there are some minor rivers and a number of canals in the city. They all add a great deal to its charm. Mirrored in their calm greenish waters, Leningrad's beautiful buildings look doubly beautiful. And in beautiful buildings the city is very rich.

The city boasts many large, modern structures and fine houses. Before the Revolution, these belonged to wealthy Russian aristocrats and industrialists. Leningrad likewise counts a number of magnificent palaces. The Czar and various members of the Imperial family lived in them while the city was Russia's capital. Only, like everything in Leningrad, these palaces are entirely different from those you saw at Moscow. There is no trace of the flamboyant and elaborate Russian style in them. They are typical Western European palaces of the eighteenth century, with straight, beautifully proportioned lines, rows of enormous windows, columns, pilasters and statues. A whole group of such palaces is aligned at one place along the Neva, making an effect of might, majesty and proud beauty. There is probably no place in the world like this.

A dramatic story lies behind the birth of the great northern city.

Peter the Great, founder of Leningrad, was a very remarkable man. Enormous of stature, he had a mind as powerful and active as his body. His energy and will were indomitable. As soon as he became Czar, he realized that his country badly needed a secure outlet into the Baltic Sea. Russia was growing rapidly, and it was vitally necessary for her to get into closer touch with the highly civilized nations of Western Europe, and to increase her trade with

them. But, after the conquest of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453, it became impossible for her to trade with these nations through the Black Sea. The only trade route she had left was by way of the Dvina River and the little Russian port of Archangel on the White Sea. But that route was very long, inconvenient, and the northern waters of the White Sea remained frozen much of the year. These factors prompted Peter to turn his attention to the Baltic. That sea, indeed, would be the shortest and best lane for the Russian trade with the West. To build a convenient Russian port on that sea became Peter's dream. But the trouble was that the Baltic shores belonged to Sweden. Relations between the Swedes and the Russians were usually very bad.

Peter decided to go to war with Sweden. Sweden at that time was a large, warlike and powerful nation. The war was long and difficult for the Russians. At first, Peter suffered heavy defeats. Finally, however, he overpowered the tenacious enemy. The Swedes gave up the southern shore of the Baltic to Russia. The Czar's dream was coming true. At last he could build a port which his country needed.

But when, in 1703, Peter first looked at Leningrad's present site, he saw nothing but bleak, northern swamps in the estuary of the Neva. More swamps and pine forests stretched for hundreds of miles around. When he told his lieutenants that a great city would soon grow up here and that that city would be "Russia's window on Europe," many of them thought that he had gone crazy. But no difficulties ever stopped Peter. Scores of thousands of peasants were driven here from all over Russia. Freezing to the waist in chilly mud, they drove down wooden stakes and boards, then dumped in carload after carload of earth and sand. They died by the hundred. And their structures often collapsed. In those days, when there was no modern machinery to help, it was a formidable task. But new

men came to replace the fallen. The Czar, himself, often worked with them as a simple laborer. He regarded no work as being below his dignity. Gradually, the water was mastered and forced into canals. Streets and houses appeared. Then new difficulties arose. Peter wanted Petersburg to be a city of stone. Up to this time, most of Moscow had been a wooden city. He was sick and tired of wooden cities with their eternal fires. However, there was no place near Petersburg where stone could be quarried. Hence, Peter decreed "the stone tax": every vehicle and every ship arriving in the city-to-be had to deliver so many building stones.

And so, the new stone city rose out of the swamp with incredible speed. In 1725, when Peter died, it was already a large and magnificent city. Ships from all over the world flocked to its harbor, doing brisk business with Russia. Most of the great palaces and other remarkable old buildings which you see today in Leningrad were only begun, or planned, by the great Czar. His successors had to complete them. But Peter laid out most of the city himself. Thus, even after his death, it grew and expanded, obeying, as it were, his command. In that sense, it remains to this day a portrait of that remarkable man's genius and will. Let me note here that, beginning with Peter, the Russian czars styled themselves also emperors. Some of the Russians long complained that "Petersburg stood on Russian bones." No doubt, there was truth in it: the building of the city had cost many human tears and lives. But that was amply redeemed by the good which the new city did to the Russian people. "The door into Europe" gave an immense spurt to Russia's progress. Stimulated by close relationship with the countries of the West, the Czardom henceforth developed much more rapidly than it had before.

Two of the palaces on the Neva, joined into one by a passage, are the famous Winter Palace and the Hermitage. Together, they

form the largest palace compound on earth. You can visit them; they are now open to the public. The Hermitage houses the greatest collection of silver, objects of art and, especially, paintings in existence. You walk literally through a mile of beautiful halls and see nothing but paintings. They are by the best old Italian, Dutch, French and other masters. Many of them are so valuable that each would fetch a fortune. This immense wealth had been assembled partly by Peter and even more by his successors.

The Winter Palace was the Czar's main residence in the city. Some of its formal reception rooms are so large that they could hold thousands of people. Their mirror-like parquet floors are inlaid with designs of exquisite workmanship. They reflect vases of malachite, jade and gold, invaluable furniture, and the gilt, painting and sculpture of the ceilings above. The magnificence of these rooms is dazzling.

The Winter Palace gives one a clear idea of how the emperors of the eighteenth century lived. Peter lived simply. But under his successors, the Russian court outdid in splendor even the court of the Kings of France. The balls given by Empress Catherine the Great, who began her reign forty years after Peter, were renowned all over Europe.

Such was the life which sprouted in the place where, only fifty years earlier, Peter had found nothing but bleak northern swamps.

With the Revolution of 1917, all palaces in Leningrad, Moscow and elsewhere, were taken over by the Soviet Government. Some of them have become museums. In others, various Government offices, schools and workers' and employees' clubs have been set up. In the outskirts of Leningrad, as in those of Moscow, entire new suburbs of modern apartment houses for workers have grown up.

During World War II, Leningrad lived through tragic days. In the fall of 1941, large German forces advanced against the city

and blasted their way to within easy sight of it. Red troops and Leningrad's civilians, who had taken up arms, fought with such stubbornness and tenacity that the enemy was unable to storm the city. The invaders then decided to starve it into surrender. They encircled it almost completely and besieged it. All railroads connecting Leningrad with the rest of Russia were cut and held by the enemy. Thus, neither foodstuffs nor war munitions could be sent to the besieged city by rail. The trickle of supplies that did reach the city came by transport planes and by small boats on Lake Ladoga. Often these boats were sunk by Nazi bombers. To add to the misery, enemy batteries poured shells into Leningrad's industrial suburbs and into the city itself. Stuka bombers raided it constantly.

Leningrad remained thus besieged for more than two years. The famine was so severe that emaciated people walked the streets like shadows, and ate mice and cats. Nearly a million of them died of starvation, or Nazi shells. Besides hunger, there was terrific cold. Coal could not reach the city, hence homes could not be heated. At school, children could write only with pencils, as ink froze in the inkwells. "Surrender! Further resistance is useless!" enemy loudspeakers ordered. But the Leningraders never thought of surrender.

It was not until January, 1944, that the Red Army managed to unclasp the Nazi steel semicircle around the city. Hitler's armies were then routed out of their powerful fortified positions and chased far away. You can imagine with what feeling the Leningraders received the relief that came.

By that time, one out of every ten houses in Leningrad had been damaged by enemy shells or reduced to ruins. After the war, the Russians repaired and rebuilt them with all of their energy. And now no traces of the terrific destruction wrought by the invader

can be seen. Smoke pours again out of the high stacks of the factories around the city.

As though by a miracle, the great palaces in Leningrad hardly suffered at all. Few were hit by shells, and even then little damage was done. Proud, calm and majestic, they seem to float over the city of Peter in the cold mist which rises from the Neva.

You have been traveling in Russia in summer. In winter you would find all of the places you have seen under a thick, white quilt of snow. Delicate white lace on the branches of every tree in the forest, straight white lines over telegraph wires, endless white plains, heavy coating of white over each roof in cities and villages.

You have, no doubt, heard of the Soviet Union as a country of severe colds and frosts. Like any very large country, including the United States, Russia has many climates. You will see later on that she has also warm, even subtropical regions. But most of Russia is cold. The summers are warm but short, while winters are long and severe.

In the area around Moscow, July is almost as hot, though never as humid, as in New York. But by the end of August, frosts may occur at night, even though the days still remain warm. Snowfalls begin in October. After the middle of November, temperature settles down below freezing point and remains there until the very end of March. Thus, the snow that falls after the middle of November does not thaw. It piles up thicker and thicker. And the country remains in its smart white attire for about four and a half solid months. Temperature sometimes drops even 30 degrees below zero. In regions of European Russia northwest of Moscow and, especially, in Siberia, winters are longer and even colder. In Siberia, the coldest regions of the world are located.

Spending their lives in a cold country, the Russians are a snow-

conscious people. They know how to live, work and play in it, how to dress for it, how to make the best of it. In the country they wear warm underwear, heavy fur coats and felt snowboots called *valenki*.

The first snowfall of the season is always a happy event for Russian children. Their winter games are all in, or with, snow. Exciting snowball battles are fought by youngsters returning from school. By pouring water, which immediately freezes, over a mound, boys build high snow mountains, and there is no greater fun than sliding down them in sledges. Large human figures are sculptured out of snow, and they "live" long. And there is no end of skiing and skating!

But winter holds joys for grownups as well. There is nothing like the pleasure of sleighing. There are special, light sledges for such drives, with heavy fur robes that keep your legs warm. Three speedy horses are harnessed to such sledges; hence their name *troika*. A troika drive, especially on a moonlit night, is a treat.

In the days before railroads, snow provided one of the best means of transportation in Russia. Boats cannot ply frozen rivers, but these rivers become ideal sledge roads. The rains of the fall and spring transform the dirt roads in the country into seas of sticky mud. Carts often sink in them up to the axle. But, on the same road hardened by frost and padded with snow, the horse trots easily, even with a well-laden sledge. In past centuries, that naturally made Russians regard the winter as their best road builder. In winter to this day, besides trucks, the Russians use a great many sledges, especially in the country. It is, in fact, in sledges that peasants do most of their transportation. It should be noted, however, that you never will see any snow in the busy streets of Moscow. It would be a hindrance there. Accordingly, no sooner does it fall than it is loaded on trucks and removed.

CHAPTER THREE

From Kiev to Samarkand

SUPPOSE from Leningrad you next go to Archangel, a port on the White Sea, in the extreme north of European Russia. Thence, flying eastward along the endless shore of the Arctic Ocean, you come to the northeasternmost belt of Siberia. Skirting all of it to the Far East, the plane lands at the airport at Vladivostok, where you began your trip through Russia. Such a flight along the Soviet Union's northern fringe would be a unique experience.

It would show you the peculiar life of an immense, little known Arctic world which exists within the Soviet Union. In winter, it is a world of a solid Arctic night which lasts for seven or eight months, of the spectacular aurora borealis, of vast snow-covered expanses and of communication in sleighs drawn by reindeer. In the short summers, when the sun shines day and night, it is a land of desolate wastes and tundra swamps overgrown with grass and field flowers, of billions of birds which gather here from all over the world, of hunters and of fishermen. In this immense world the population is insignificant. Human settlements, located chiefly at the mouth of rivers and along the ocean shore, are small, few and far between.

Unfriendly and forbidding as it is, even that world is now developing. Great mineral wealth has been discovered in its frozen soil. For instance, around Vorkuta in the northeasternmost corner of European Russia, oil and coal have been found. There is oil also in various regions of Siberia's extreme north. In other sections gold and valuable ores have been discovered. Seaports, airports and

electric power plants have been built, chiefly by convict labor, along the huge Arctic shore.

But, interesting as a trip through that Arctic belt might be, it would be also monotonous. For it is not there that the main road of Russia's national life passes at present. You will find infinitely more to see if you return from Moscow to Vladivostok by way of the Soviet Union's southern regions. Accordingly, you board at Moscow a train southwestward which, in about sixteen hours, will bring you to Kiev, the capital of the Ukraine.

The Ukraine, or, as it was formerly called, Little Russia, is a large country in itself, about the size of Germany, and an extremely important part of the Soviet Union. In the south it runs clear to the shores of the Black Sea and of the Azov Sea. The word Ukraine is derived from *okraina* which in Russian means border, or borderland. It is an appropriate name for the country. For west of the Ukraine lie foreign countries—Poland, Rumania. And across the Black Sea is Turkey.

Approaching Kiev, you begin to feel the touch of the south. Nature is much friendlier in the Ukraine than in Central Russia or Siberia. It is a mellow, very green and very lovely country which has a smiling quality. Ukrainian winters are relatively mild. The snow lasts for about three months only and frosts are seldom severe. There are forests, chiefly of oak and elm, only in the northern part of the Ukraine, including the region of Kiev. South of it, the country is open, prosperous farmland. The black, fertile soil of the Ukraine is widely famed. Before World War II this section produced so much wheat, barley, corn, vegetables and fruit that it was called "the granary of Russia." Indeed, it was even more important agriculturally to the Soviet Union than the Kuibyshev area on the Volga and Western Siberia. It also pro-

duces huge crops of sugar beet. In Russia, sugar is made almost exclusively out of that plant. And the Ukraine supplies most of it.

At railroad stations, Ukrainian peasants, some of them with bags behind their backs, board your train. The touch of the south makes itself felt in them, too. While "Great Russians" from Moscow, the Volga or Siberia are predominantly blond, the Ukrainians often have brown eyes and dark hair. The men are tall and powerfully built. Ukrainian peasant women, in white kerchiefs and embroidered blouses, with strings of beads around their necks, are very good-looking.

The Ukrainians are of the same stock as the Great Russians. But they speak a dialect of their own which a Great Russian understands without difficulty, but which, nevertheless, is distinct. There is a great deal of charm and, perhaps, a streak of southern laziness in the Ukrainian character which the Muscovites do not possess. The Ukrainians also have a reputation of being a bit obstinate, and their shrewd wit and humor, that remind one of the Irish, are famed all over Russia.

Ukrainian villages are very neat and attractive. The plaster walls of peasant cabins are cleanly whitewashed; their roofs of darkened straw look rustic. There are always vegetable gardens and cherry and fruit trees around. Near the village there is usually a pond bordered by weeping willows.

The Ukraine is almost as densely peopled as the Moscow area. Besides being a great agricultural country, it also possesses an immense industrial wealth. It has iron mines at Krivoi Rog, high-grade coal mines in the Donets Basin and manganese deposits near Nikopol, which rate among the richest in the world. Such Ukrainian cities as Kiev, Kharkov, Dnepropetrovsk and Stalino are large and very important industrial centers. The Ukrainian plants and factories produce practically everything—steel, various alloys, machine

tools, motors, locomotives, electrical equipment, chemical products, and ready-to-wear garments. In the early thirties, with American engineering help, the Soviets built at Zaporozhye, on the Dnieper River, a huge concrete dam and a great hydroelectric power plant. That plant supplies electricity to an aluminum plant, to steel works and to factories in a broad area around it.

Unlike the young industries of Siberia and the Urals, those of the Ukraine existed long before the Revolution of 1917. But they were also greatly expanded by the Soviet Government. Thus, the Ukraine is a far better developed country than the eastern parts of Russia. It has also a large network of railroads and good seaports.

Kiev, which boasts a population of over 1,100,000, is a remarkably attractive and picturesque city. From elevated hills on the western bank of the Dnieper it overlooks that river and the endless plains, undulating fields and pastures that lie beyond it. Though not so huge as the Volga, the Dnieper is a large and navigable river, and it has played a very great part in the past life of the Russian people.

The northern part of the Ukraine around Kiev is one of the oldest parts of Russia. It had been settled by Russians much earlier than were most other regions of the present-day Soviet Union, including that of Moscow. Kiev is at least 280 years older than Moscow. The Soviet capital traces its history back to 1147, while Kiev dates authentically to the year 860, and probably even before that. Accordingly, it is known as the mother of Russian cities. And there still are spots in Kiev which show its antiquity. For instance, among its many churches, there is the beautiful Cathedral of St. Sophia, with its famous ten golden cupolas. It was first built in 1037 by Prince Yaroslav who then reigned in Kiev. During subsequent wars and invasions, sections of it were destroyed and, later, rebuilt. But a considerable part of the original cathedral remains unchanged. Inside it, you see on the walls the magnificent and invaluable mo-

saics and frescoes of saints which Greek masters, summoned from Byzantium, made for Prince Yaroslav. The foundations of some of the buildings in the famous Lavra—or monastery—in the suburbs of Kiev, are equally ancient. That monastery is also famed for a vast labyrinth of deep subterranean catacombs connected with the caves which overlook the Dnieper. At the dawn of Russian history, monks of saintly life, who had forsaken all things earthy, lived here in solitude and prayer. You still can see the niches in which some of them were buried. It was in these catacombs, too, that the people of Kiev sought refuge when invaders stormed, sacked and burned their city.

Ancient Kiev, and the part of the Ukraine around it, can be compared to our eastern states. Our country developed from a few little colonies on the Atlantic coast. Then its pioneering settlers gradually spread from Virginia, Massachusetts and Rhode Island to the north and to the west, eventually reaching the Pacific coast. Similarly, the Russians, whose history began at Kiev, expanded with time eastward and northeastward, until they occupied all of the immense country they inhabit at present. It is, thus, at Kiev that Russia was born.

Like the region of Leningrad, the entire Ukraine suffered heavily during World War II. Nazi armies invaded it in 1941 and were thrown out by the Red Army only by the beginning of 1944. But they left the Ukraine a ravaged country.

Some of its cities were left in ruins. In Kiev, whole street blocks comprising some of the best buildings were reduced to shambles. Happily, the Cathedral of St. Sophia did not suffer. Most of the country's great industrial plants were badly damaged or destroyed. Large sections were blasted out of the great Zaporozhye dam on the Dnieper. The coal mines of the Donets Basin were flooded. And, in many places, the rich wheatfields and the famous Ukrain-

ian orchards were ploughed under by shells and trampled by tanks and by the feet of advancing and retreating armies.

But the Russians did not waste time crying over spilled milk. No sooner had the guns stopped barking than the task of reconstruction began. These were years of very hard work. But what was destroyed has been rebuilt and added to. The Ukraine's present industrial production exceeds by far the pre-war figures.

From Kiev, by railroad you cross the plains of the southern Ukraine, to Odessa. It is a city of over 660,000 and one of the country's main ports on the Black Sea. Its well-planned boulevards, squares and parks overlook from an elevated shore the busy port district, and the gulf beyond it. In former years, Odessa did a thriving foreign import and export business. One feels in it the proximity of the Balkans and of the Mediterranean. In the crowds which one sees in its streets, there is a considerable mixture of Greeks, Rumanians and Caucasians.

At Odessa, you board a ship which, after a night's crossing, will land you at Yalta, a port in the Crimea. The little Crimean Peninsula, which lies south of the Ukraine, cuts deep into the Black Sea. On the east, it is flanked by the Azov Sea. It is the favorite playground of the entire Soviet Union, a Russian Florida, if you like. You understand it the moment you take a look at the picturesque embankments, streets and gardens of Yalta.

Near the Crimea's southern shore runs the chain of Yaila Mountains. Though not very high, these mountains suffice to protect that shore from northern winds. Hence the climate is warm here. The summer heat is pleasantly relieved by sea breezes. And in winter snow falls seldom and melts almost at once.

On the southern slopes of the mountains and along the entire shore line, the vegetation is very rich. All around Yalta, cypresses,

oleanders, magnolias, mimosas, pomegranates, olives, figs and other southern plants and fruit grow in great abundance. Hillsides are covered with vineyards—the Crimean wines are famous—and with tobacco plantations. Gardens are gay with a profusion of all sorts of flowers. Here and there, this mass of greenery is studded with the picturesque ruins of mediæval fortresses, Greek temples and cities. At the dawn of our era, there were thriving Greek colonies in the Crimea. The rich colors of the landscape and the dark reddish and yellow-white rocks which rise from the sea in steep cliffs, complete the lovely picture which the Crimea presents. Incidentally, despite its name, the Black Sea is intensely blue. It is only on stormy days that it grows dark gray, almost black.

Thousands of people from all over the Soviet Union flock to the Crimea to spend their vacations. Here, they sun themselves on its many beaches, play, swim, and hike in the Yaila Mountains. Most of the small and cheerful cities along the coast—Yalta, Alupka, Gurzuf—are primarily summer resorts. In former days, the Czar and other members of the Imperial family had their summer palaces here. After the Revolution, these palaces, together with a great many new buildings, have been transformed into hotels and rest homes chiefly for the upper crust of the Soviet society. Government officials, scientists, engineers, writers, doctors and some better-paid workmen spend their vacations there. At the southern tip of the Crimea lies the great fortress of Sevastopol, which is the main base of the Russian Black Sea fleet. A deep bay, sheltered by hills in which warships can find safety, makes it an ideal place for such a base.

Before World War II, one saw in the Crimea a great many Tartars. The Tartars are a race closely related to the Turks, and they speak a tongue which is a dialect of the Turkish language. Some of them still wore their national dress—small, close-fitting,

embroidered caps and long, robe-like coats—and remained faithful to the Islamic, or Mohammedan religion of their ancestors. One sees to this day picturesque Mohammedan mosques (churches) in the Crimea.

Until the year 1783, the Crimea did not belong to Russia. It formed a half-independent Tartar State ruled by a khan, or king, of its own. Half-independent, because the khans of the Crimea recognized over themselves a loose control of the mighty sultans of Turkey who had their seat at Constantinople. In wars and other emergencies, the sultans often helped the Crimean khans.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Crimean Tartars were a warlike people, and their khanate (kingdom) was very powerful. Besides the Crimea proper, they controlled the whole southern part of the Ukraine, where the cities of Odessa and Nikolayev lie today. Moreover, the Crimean Tartars, often helped by their Turkish allies, frequently raided the Moscow Czar-dom. Armed to the teeth these mounted Tartar-Turkish hordes rode through the southern steppes into Muscovia and, with wild screams and shouts, struck like lightning at Russian cities. They pillaged and burned these cities, laid waste the country around, massacred the population and abducted as many prisoners as they could. Later, the captive Russians were sent to Constantinople where, in those days, there was a large slave market. Here they were sold as slaves to rich Turks, Egyptians, Persians. With neither radio, nor telegraph in existence, a Russian city struck by the Tartars could not promptly warn other cities, lying farther north, of their approach. The mounted raiders often traveled faster than the rumor about them. That enabled them to penetrate deep into the very heart of Muscovia, and even, in 1571, to sack and burn Moscow itself.

It was only in the times of Empress Catherine the Great that Russia became strong enough definitely to wipe out "the Crimean

scourge." Led by her brilliant commanders, Catherine's forces annihilated the entire Turkish fleet in a great naval battle, and inflicted terrific defeats on the Turks on land. The Sultan of Constantinople was forced to give up his claim to the control over the Crimea. Left without Turkish help, the Khan capitulated, in 1773, to Empress Catherine. Ten years later the Crimea was annexed outright and then became part of Russia.

For nearly 150 years, the Crimean Tartars lived, as thriving vine growers and cattle breeders, in perfect harmony with the Russians. But after 1917, Russia's new rulers, the Communists, declared war on all religion in general and on Mohammedanism in particular. That exasperated the devoutly religious Crimean Tartars and prompted some of them, in 1941-43, to coöperate with the German invaders. After the war, the Soviet Government punished the Tartars for it with stark cruelty. Out of the Crimea's entire Tartar population of some 350,000, many were summarily shot and others banished to Siberia. What has become of them there, is not known. In any case, few Crimean Tartars remain today in their native Crimea.

From Yalta, still farther east, across one more strip of the Black Sea, is the Caucasus. That country, sandwiched between the Black and the Caspian Seas, is famed for its oil, its mountains, its unusual beauty, and for the striking and remarkable peoples which inhabit it. Novorossiysk, where you land, is its main port. One cannot help noticing from the ship its huge grain elevators. To get a good look at the Caucasus, take a train, or, better still, hire a car at Novorossiysk and drive southeastward, into the interior of the country.

At first one travels through flat farm country along the marshy banks of the Kuban River. Summers are so hot here that, besides wheat and corn, cotton and rice are also grown. The husky, tanned

peoples that inhabit this part of the Caucasus are of Ukrainian stock; they call themselves Kuban Cossacks.

After you have covered some 250 miles, the country begins gently to rise. Farmlands are succeeded by increasingly wide stretches of wild steppe overgrown with feather grass. When stirred by the breeze, it shines in the sun like silver. In the midst of the day's heat, the wind blowing from the south at moments grows chill. Then, all of a sudden, you notice far on the horizon an intensely white, dented line in sharp contrast to the blue sky. It looks like a string of irregular, badly selected pearls. You have sighted the snow-covered peaks of the great Caucasian Range.

The Caucasian Mountains are by far the highest in Europe. Such of their peaks as the stately, double-headed Elbrus, or the Kazbek, exceed by nearly 3,000 feet the loftiest summits of the Swiss Alps. The main Caucasian Range is about 750 miles long and 35 to 130 miles wide. It runs from northwest to southeast, crossing diagonally the entire Caucasus. Like the Urals in the north, it is regarded as a dividing line between Europe and Asia.

The Caucasian Range is so difficult of access that no railroad runs across it. Instead, railroads circle it along both the Black and Caspian shores towards which the mountains slope. There are, however, a few passes across the main range over which one can ride on horseback, or even drive in a car. The best car route is called the Military Georgian Highway.

It starts from Ordzhonikidze, a fair-sized industrial city and railway center at the northern foot of the range. From that point on, the road, following the valley of the Terek River, winds higher and higher. The lower parts of the Caucasian slopes are covered with dense forests teeming with bears, wolves and lynxes. But higher up forests disappear; only grass and Alpine shrubbery grow there. The air, crystal pure, becomes chill. Here and there, in shady

wrinkles of the terrain, snow lies in mid-July. And, over these green, bare slopes, rise, in broken lines, immense peaks. Rocky and rugged, they are covered with eternal snow, except for the places where the rock is so sheer that snow cannot lie. Huge glaciers, up to two miles wide, descend from these peaks. The scenic effect is wild and indescribably beautiful.

At a distance, you notice the *auls*, or villages of Caucasian mountaineers, nestling in the rocks and valley. They are strikingly unlike the villages of Russian peasants. Their small, flat-roofed cabins, made of stone or of clay, cluster so closely together that they look like compact anthills hewn out of rock. Sometimes, near an aul, are the ruins of a stone castle with towers. Such castles, similar to the ones which were built in Western Europe in the Middle Ages, are a characteristic feature of the Caucasus.

Striking, too, are the mountaineers one encounters on the highway. Their types greatly vary. Some are blue-eyed. But most of them have jade-black eyes, aquiline noses and well-chiseled Asiatic features. Occasionally, one still sees women in their traditional wide and long bloomers tied around ankles. Many men wear, even in summer, fur caps and wide cloaks of natural black sheep wool. Some of them still carry daggers stuck into their belts. There are no better horsemen in the world than these mountaineers who are mostly peaceful sheep breeders. But if you had been traveling some ninety years ago, to encounter them would have been no fun at all. At that time, post coaches ventured over the Military Georgian Highway only with a heavy escort of mounted Cossacks.

The Caucasian mountaineers have a dramatic and romantic history. They are not of Russian stock. About thirty-five different races, speaking as many different languages and dialects, such as the Chechen, the Circassians, the Ingush, inhabit the main range of the Caucasus and its northern slopes. Some of them occupy each a

whole section of the mountains. But others are so small as to people only one or two valleys. In the next one, two or three miles away, another tongue is spoken. Nearly all of these peoples are followers of Islam, or Mohammed.

There is much that remains unknown in the history of the mountaineers. But what accounts for that amazing variety of races, is this. In the early stages of our era, many peoples migrated from Asia to the present-day European Russia and still farther west. On their way, they passed through the steppes of the northern Caucasus. As they did so, fragments of these peoples were chipped off their main stock by enemy attacks, and by other adversities, and sought security in the Caucasian Mountains. On a plain they would have intermixed and, with time, fused into one race. But living for centuries, as they have, in inaccessible valleys, they were practically shut off from the rest of the world. And so, they preserved not only their respective tongues, but also their ways of life which are those of the eighth or ninth century.

Until ninety years ago, these mountaineer races formed a number of little independent principalities headed by their own native chieftains, or princes. In these principalities, Asiatic mediævalism reigned. Hot-blooded, like all the peoples of the Caucasus, the mountaineers had a very keen sense of personal honor. Insults could be avenged only by the dagger, and interminable blood feuds resulted. Members of two quarreling families would often go on killing one another for a century. We have had much the same story in the back-hills of Kentucky and other remote mountain sections of our own Southland. But the mountaineer took it as his sacred duty to offer to a friend, or *kunak*, anything the latter might need—his unbounded hospitality, his horse, his very life. Peaceful work was looked at in the mountains with contempt and was left largely to women. Reckless courage, skill in combat, and utter con-

tempt of death were regarded as the only manly virtues. To slay in battle an enemy, especially if he were "a Christian dog," to plunder his horse, saddle and other belongings and to sell his wife into Turkish slavery, rated as an exploit.

The mountaineers kept fighting among themselves. Besides, descending from their auls, they raided Russian Cossack settlements and their other neighbors. It prompted the Russian czars to subdue them. It was not easy. Each aul was a natural fortress. And, fired by Mohammedan fanaticism, the mountaineers fought with admirable heroism and skill. The Sultans of Turkey managed to supply them with firearms. It was not until 1864 that the mountain tribes were conquered.

The Russians showed a great respect for the mountaineers' religion, customs and traditions. Shortly after the conquest, many mountaineers, whose fathers had fought the Russians to their last breath, served with fidelity and distinction in the regiments of the Czar. Mountaineer chieftains were made Russian noblemen.

But since 1917, some of the mountaineer tribes have been unable to get along with the new, Communist, rulers of Russia, who showed no respect for their religion and mediæval traditions. And some of these tribes, such as the Chechen and the Ingush, have been disposed of by the Soviet authorities as summarily and cruelly as were the Crimean Tartars.

But the car continues to climb. The highway enters a gorge so narrow as to be really a mere crack in a huge wall of rock. There is just room enough for two cars to pass. Below, is the three-yard-wide bed of the Terek. Thus compressed, the river becomes a swift torrent and roars like Niagara Falls. Over the road, walls of rock rise sheer for two miles. No sunshine ever penetrates into the gorge.

But soon the highway reaches its highest point. Suddenly, an end-

less view opens up of Transcaucasia, which is the whole Asiatic part of the Caucasus south of the main range. It is a country of considerable size, much of it mountainous. Incidentally, at the southernmost tip of Transcaucasia, lies Mount Ararat, on which, according to the Bible, Noah's Ark landed after the Great Flood.

The descent begins. It is far less steep than was the ascent. One sees large vineyards on the mountainsides. In the valleys are cultivated fields, orchards and large, prosperous-looking villages. The whole western half of Transcaucasia is known, after the name of the people that inhabits it, as Georgia. From a mountain brook, a whole string of sun-tanned Georgian women carrying tall, clay jugs of water on their shoulders, walk back to their village. They look picturesque in their colorful clothes. Farther away, again the ruins of a castle may be seen.

A few hours later, you drive into Tbilisi or Tiflis, capital of Georgia, a city with over half a million inhabitants, which lies astride the swift Kura River. Alongside of electricity, beautiful theatres and hotels, broad boulevards and large industrial plants, are the old native quarters with narrow, crooked streets. Here, mixed and colorful crowds of Russians, Georgians, Armenians, Persians and Tartars circulate at all hours. The modern West and the ancient Asiatic world thus live there side by side. One encounters this contrast in most Transcaucasian cities. In the stores of Tbilisi, some of them open-air affairs, beautiful handmade Oriental rugs are sold. Here, just as in the mountain auls, you find them in most homes. For rugs are one of the main luxuries and furnishings of the East.

After crossing the Caucasian Range, you find yourself in a new climate. Though hot in the summer, the steppes of the northern Caucasus still belong to the moderate clime of Central Europe. But Transcaucasia, shielded from the north by the main range, is a typically southern country, much more so than the Crimea. The

western part of Georgia, around the port of Batumi on the Black Sea, is even distinctly subtropical. A short trip to it from Tbilisi by rail is well worth while. In summer, temperature in Batumi climbs to 115 degrees and more. Besides, there is very high humidity. That makes the region a sort of a nature's hothouse. Vegetation is fantastically rich and vigorous here. Batumi's white houses, descending from hills towards the sea, drown in cascades of roses, camellias, mimosas, magnolias and various exotic flowers, which seem to sprout out of every square foot of ground. Palms grow here. Orange, lemon and grapefruit plantations are scattered all around the city. It is also from this region that Russia gets her domestically grown tea. But not all of Transcaucasia is like that. In some sections, especially in Armenia, which lies southeast of Georgia, there is not enough humidity, and the hot Caucasian sun dries the ground into a semidesert.

The Georgians, like the Armenians, have been Christians since the very beginning of our era. Moreover, they have a civilization of their own which is about three thousand years old, much older in fact, than our Western civilization. Tbilisi, which is a "young" Georgian city, was in existence in the year 379, or more than eleven hundred years before Columbus discovered America! For centuries, the Georgians had a strong and independent kingdom. The Kings of Georgia traced their pedigree back to King David of the Bible, and their Court lacked neither refinement, nor splendor. But their Christian kingdom was surrounded on all sides by hostile Islamic peoples. From the north, Caucasian mountaineers constantly raided it. Worse still, from the south, the Shah of Persia and the Sultan of Turkey (who had long since overcome and subjugated the Armenians) invaded it again and again. In the eighteenth century, Georgia became badly weakened by these invasions, which it no longer could resist. The only friendly Christian nation

which could protect Georgia was Russia. Hence, in 1798, George XIII, last King of Georgia, renounced his crown in favor of the Russian Czar and thus made his kingdom part of Russia.

Like the Crimea, the Caucasus attracts thousands of vacationers from all over the Soviet Union. On the northern slopes of the great range lie Kislovodsk and Essentuki, the two best watering places in Russia. It is here, too, that mountain climbers flock to scale the great Caucasian peaks. And north of Batumi, higher up in the mountains, there are a number of lovely resorts where the heat is moderate and the scenery is very beautiful.

From Batumi, a train takes you east, clear across Transcaucasia, to Baku, on the Caspian shore. Baku is the largest city in the Caucasus. It houses nearly 1,000,000 inhabitants. And it is famed as one of the greatest oil centers in the world. The ground in the region around Baku literally oozes oil. The city is surrounded by a forest of oil derricks which extends as far as the eye can reach. In the city itself, there are huge oil refineries and plants producing tubes and drilling machinery for oil wells. Crowds of Asiatics, wearing soiled overalls and smelling strongly of gasoline, fill its noisy streets.

Baku is also a great Caspian port, and ships much of its oil in tankers to Astrakhan and thence up the Volga. The balance of Baku oil flows by pipe line to Batumi whence it is distributed among other Russian Black Sea ports. The region of Baku, though the richest, is not the only oil region in the Caucasus. There are large oilfields in the north, near Ordzhonikidze, and elsewhere in the country.

The whole eastern section of Transcaucasia, including Baku, is called Azerbaidjan. It is inhabited by Tartars who are of the same stock, and speak the same tongue, as the Tartars of the Crimea. Which goes to show once more what a crazy quilt of races the Caucasus is!

Oil, however, is by no means the only wealth found in the moun-

tains and valleys of the Caucasus. At Chiatura, in northern Georgia, there are great manganese mines. In the arid mountains of Armenia, much copper, tin, nickel and chromium have been discovered and, recently, large smelting plants have been built. The oil industry and the railroads of the Caucasus have been in existence for over seventy years. But many other industrial developments in the country are much younger. Quite a few of them have been started within the past twenty years. The Soviet Government has been pushing the industrialization of the country as energetically as it has been pushing that of Siberia. The Caucasus is becoming modernized.

There is still much Asiatic mediævalism in the far-off shepherd villages of Armenia and of Georgia. The Tartar women of Azerbaidjan still weave the same designs into rugs that they wove four hundred years ago. And in especially inaccessible auls, blood feuds still are fought to this day. But hydroelectric power plants, built over mountain torrents, have appeared. At night, their lights illuminate new industrial settlements whose sites were a rocky wilderness only fifteen years ago. The number of schools, technical academies and factories is growing. Thus, modernism is supplanting the mediæval Oriental spirit of the country. Unfortunately, however, the Soviet regime often rudely forces modernism on the peoples of the Caucasus, showing no respect for their religion, traditions and peculiar psychology. That causes passive, and in some cases even active, resistance, which, far from accelerating the progress of the country, delays it.

And now you go on your last trip in the Soviet Union. From Baku, you cross the Caspian Sea due eastward, to Krasnovodsk, in Russian Central Asia, formerly known as Turkestan. It is a huge land. In size it equals one-third of the United States. In the south, it borders on the Kingdoms of Iran (Persia) and Afghanistan and,

also, on Sinkiang, which is a part of China. At one point, in the high plateau of Pamir, only some eighteen miles of Afghan territory separate it from India. The mysterious Tibet lies also near, beyond Sinkiang. In the north, Central Asia fuses with the plains of western Siberia.

Krasnovodsk is uninteresting. It is just a busy industrial port, dirty, dusty and sun-scorched. You now board here an eastbound train on the Trans-Caspian railroad which runs the entire length of Central Asia close to its southern frontier.

Soon after leaving Krasnovodsk, the few patches of greenery around it disappear. The flat terrain becomes desolate and barren. In another half hour there is nothing to be seen but blinding sun and an endless sea of sand. The dry heat is terrific. Imperceptibly, though there is little wind, your compartment fills with sand. You feel it on the seat, on your hands, in your teeth. You have entered the great Central Asiatic desert.

You are cutting only through an edge of it. In less than a day, the scenery around you will change. But if the railroad were running northeast instead of eastward, you would have to ride across about nine hundred miles of this desolation. From north to south this desert is about four hundred and fifty miles broad. Here it is called Kara Kum, or Black Desert. Farther east, it bears the name of Kizil Kum, or Red Desert. Still farther, it is the Hunger Steppe. But it is desert just the same, with green oases dotted along the few—very few—rivers that cross it. The whole middle belt of Central Asia, or 54 percent of its huge area, is occupied by it.

The thin, white-yellowish sand lies in softly undulating mounds, which look like immobilized sea waves. Each mound is covered with a delicate pattern of tiny ripples embroidered on it by wind. Here and there, tufts of tough, brownish grass struggle to grow, but, for the most part, even they do not try to dispute the reign of

the desert. The dry air is absolutely transparent, so that you can see to an almost endless distance. Jackals howl here at night. There are many snakes. Along the Iranian frontier are the dreaded cobras. The scorpion and the poisonous spider *kara-kurt* are also among the inhabitants of the desert.

Near a station, you see a long caravan led by native Turkoman drivers. In past centuries, such caravans were the only means of desert travel and transportation. Now, though the locomotive and the truck are supplanting them along the main routes, they still play an important part. The prehistoric looking animal with its calm, dignified head endures the heat much better, and can remain without water much longer, than the horse. For the camel is a native of Central Asia; it lives there both domesticated and wild. The only things camel caravans are afraid of, are sandstorms. They momentarily paralyze all living things. Neither man nor beast dares open his eyes for fear of having them filled with thin, whirling sand. Even to breathe is both difficult and dangerous. This desert is studded with the bones of those whom its storms have conquered.

Central Asia's great misfortune is that it badly lacks water. Remote from all oceans, it has but little rainfall. Worse still, the huge country has but few rivers. These are only two large ones, Amu Darya and Syr Darya. Crossing the bulk of the country from the south, they both drain in the Aral Sea which, like the Caspian Sea, is a large landlocked lake. A few smaller rivers flowing, likewise, from the south northward, never reach any sea. They just get lost in the sands of the Kara Kum and Kizil Kum. And the heat is gradually drying up the Caspian and the Aral seas. Very slowly the level of water is sinking in both. "If only we could transport here some of the Siberian swamps!" a Russian engineer once said. The natives who stood around shook their heads understandingly. Indeed, water in Central Asia has been always considered as the

greatest of treasures. It is valued here more than gold, nay, sometimes more than human life itself!

But in the north, the deserts come to an end. There is a relatively well watered belt of important farmlands there, which fuse with those of western Siberia. And in the south, too, the train soon takes you out of the sands.

As you are nearing the city of Ashkhabad, the terrain rises gently, and the train enters intensely green valleys with large cotton plantations, vegetable gardens and orchards.

In the southernmost part of Central Asia, along the frontiers of Afghanistan and of Sinkiang, great mountain chains rise. One of them, the immense Tyan-Shan, and the Pamir Plateau near it, count snow peaks which are much higher even than those of the Caucasus. Some attain an altitude of 24,000 feet. In the broad, flat valleys between these chains and on wide, elevated areas that radiate from them, the soil is not sand but a reddish, very fertile loess. More important still, there is at least *some* water in these areas. The small rivers descending from mountains are not yet dried up here. True, they are not sufficient, and the pitiless sun tends to blight also much of this terrain into a desert. But, since times immemorial, the natives of Central Asia have been utilizing every drop of water by building complicated systems of artificial irrigation. Your train crosses again and again networks of *aryks*, deep, narrow ditches by which water is diverted from the rivers to the fields. The whole history of Central Asia hinges on these *aryks*. In times of peace and good government, artificial irrigation was carefully maintained and developed and the country prospered. For anything grows here in abundance when the soil is watered. But when wars came and the *aryks* fell into disrepair, the ground dried, and the desert, passing to the offensive, unleashed misery and famine on the inhabitants.

Central Asia's southern belt teems with game. Bear and wild

camels abound. In swampy regions along the Amu Darya, there are tigers.

It is in the southern belt too, that the great bulk of Central Asia's population lives. And it is here that some of its main cities, such as Ashkhabad, Merv, Bokhara, are located. But you do not get off the train yet. It is best to stop farther east, at Samarkand, which is the most typical and remarkable of them. There is a hint of the Mohammedan East in the Caucasus, but here at Samarkand, you are in the very heart of the ancient Islamic world.

In Samarkand, as in Tbilisi, there are wide avenues with electricity and modern, streamlined buildings. But the great bulk of its inhabitants live in the old native quarters. While walking through its winding streets, you see only one- or two-story walls and entrance doors, but hardly any windows. For centuries, polygamy reigned here, as in other Mohammedan countries. The wives of an Uzbek or Tadzhik were supposed to be seen by strangers as little as possible. Therefore the windows of native houses do not face the street but are turned inside on inner courts. There are, also, wide porches on flat, walled-in roofs.

But, on commercial streets, what a striking crowd is to be seen! Russians and Western clothes are in minority. The small, embroidered caps, or white towels tied around the head, long kimono-like *khalats* and bearded, Asiatic faces with slanting eyes, predominate. In the square where there is a bazaar, a fountain gushes out of a stone shield decorated with geometrical, lacelike designs. Nearby, in a *chai-khana*, or inn, Uzbeks sit cross-legged and silently examine rugs. The famous Tekin, and various other rugs, are made not far from here.

Samarkand takes great pride in its mosques (Mohammedan churches). A few of them, grouped in the center of the city, with square courtyards of tinted tiles between them, are exquisitely beau-

tiful. They are over 550 years old and remind one of the great Taj-Mahal palace in India. From high, round towers, standing beside them and known as minarets, the muezzins, or Islamic priests, for centuries called the faithful to prayer. Unfortunately, some of these mosques are falling into disrepair and gradually crumbling.

Of the natives of Central Asia, the Turkomans, the Uzbeks, the Kazakhs and the Kirghiz are closely related to the Tartars, and they also speak Turkish dialects. The Tadzhiks are of Persian stock. One of the chief pursuits in the country's valleys is cotton growing, and agriculture in general. Higher on the slopes of the Pamir Plateau and of the nearby mountain chains, there is extensive sheep breeding. It is from here that we obtain much of the Persian lamb fur sold in our stores. A large percentage of the Kazakhs and, especially, of the Kirghiz in the elevated eastern part of the country, still live a nomadic life. With their droves of horses, camels and tents made of rough felt, they roam the endless plains, stopping now here, now there, but never anywhere for long.

These peoples have a long and glorious past. Samarkand was a large and rich city as early as 330 years before Christ. Alexander the Great, famous Macedonian conqueror, coveted it as a great prize, fought for it and took it. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries of our era, the great Mongolian rulers Genghis Khan and Tamerlane made Samarkand their capital. They managed to create a huge and very powerful State out of the Mongols, Kirghiz, Uzbeks and Turkomans. Driven by ambition and Islamic fanaticism, they launched from Samarkand immense invasions. Tamerlane dominated much of China, India, Persia, Turkey and other countries. Even Russia for centuries suffered heavily from these invasions. In comparison to them, the raids of the Crimean Tartars on Muscovia were mere pinpricks.

At that time, Samarkand was one of the richest cities in the world.

No end of gold and precious stones were amassed in it. Arts and sciences flourished at Tamerlane's court. Great mathematicians, astronomers, architects and poets were assembled in Samarkand. Its vast crumbling mosques are eloquent silent reminders of its vanished splendor and power.

As time went on, Tamerlane's great empire broke up. Its Central Asiatic part split up into small, despotic kingdoms which long fought among themselves. With their irrigation system ruined, large sections of the country passed through terrific famines. The religious and political passions and ambitions which had once driven the Turkomans, the Uzbeks and the Kirghiz to great deeds died out. In their sun-scorched country, they fell into centuries-long apathy, into calm, meditative Oriental sleep. Between 1868 and 1884, the Imperial Russian Government conquered the Central Asiatic kingdoms and principalities, more by diplomacy than by war. And the people willingly accepted Russian rule. And, with the building of railroads and with the introduction of better administration by the Russians, prosperity gradually began to return to Central Asia.

In fifty or sixty years, Central Asia has achieved a very great deal. Along the shores of Lake Balkhash, in the eastern part of the country, immense deposits of copper and of other valuable metals have been found, great mines opened up and smelting plants built. North of that region, at Karaganda, a rich new coal basin has been developed. In many other sections of the country, oil is being extracted. More important still, Central Asia's entire irrigation system has been greatly expanded and improved. What the natives had before, were primitive, though elaborate, networks of *aryks*. Now, in several regions, irrigation canals seventy, ninety and even 110 miles long have been built. Wherever necessary, electric power plants pump water uphill. And smaller *aryks* radiating from these huge

new arteries now irrigate vast areas. Such an irrigation canal in the potentially rich Ferghana Valley at the foot of the Pamir Plateau has brought water to more than 850,000 acres of the formerly sun-scorched terrain.

As a result of these irrigation projects, Central Asia has been able to increase immensely its production of cotton. In 1925, the Uzbeks and the Tadzhiks grew only a little more than was required for their own needs. The Soviet Union had to import the great bulk of the cotton it needed from foreign countries. In 1940, however, enough cotton was grown in Central Asia to satisfy the needs of all Russia.

Tashkent, the largest city of Central Asia, lying northeast of Samarkand, has lately become a great industrial center with a population of 900,000. It has a huge hydroelectric power plant on Chirchik River, an equally great chemical plant and various other industries. Large textile factories have been set up both there and in the country's other cities. In the twenties and thirties severe anti-Soviet riots took place in Central Asia and were quelled with great cruelty. They were due chiefly to the fact that the Communists exasperated the natives by rudely offending their traditions and their religious feeling. Besides, the Soviet Government made them sell their cotton at an inadequately low "fixed" price. Now, however, it is all water long since run under the bridges.

After having reached the eastern part of Central Asia, you can board a train on the railroad called Turk-Sib. That line runs along the eastern part of the country in a northerly direction and eventually joins the great Trans-Siberian Railroads at Novosibirsk.

Once at Novosibirsk, you change trains and ride eastward, across the Siberian taiga familiar to you, to Vladivostok. A trans-Pacific liner will take you thence back to the United States.

CHAPTER FOUR

How Russia Came to Be

NOW you have an idea of the main regions of which the Soviet Union is composed. You also have an idea of its immensity. Russia occupies one-sixth of the entire land surface of our planet. Two and a half countries the size of the United States, including Alaska, Hawaii and the Philippines, would have to be put together to make a territory equal to that of the Soviet Union which, on the contrary, is one huge, uninterrupted stretch of land. The sun never sets within its boundaries. As it gets dark in the western part of the Ukraine, the sun begins to rise over Vladivostok. And, as one goes from east to west, the coming of the New Year is celebrated by the Russian people at ten different hours.

In 1959 about 209,000,000 men, women and children inhabited the Soviet Union. At that time the population of the United States was estimated at approximately 176,000,000. Not all of the 209,000,000 Soviet citizens are Russians by blood. As you already know, quite a few other races, such as the Tartars, the Georgians, the Turkomans, and the Uzbeks, live side by side with the Russians in various sections of the country. All of these non-Russian races, some of which I have not even mentioned, aggregate about 53,000,000. But the remaining 156,000,000 citizens of the Soviet Union are Russians, no matter whether they be Great Russians, Ukrainians or (in a region north of the Ukraine) White Russians.

Thus, the Russians form a great majority of the population. Moreover, they have always been the leading race in the country. It is they who chiefly determined the course of the country's history and who have made the Soviet Union what it is today.

Who are the Russians, then? And how is it that they have succeeded in occupying a country so immense and rich in natural resources?

The Russians form the eastern branch of the Slavic, or Slavonic, group of peoples. Besides them, that group comprises also western Slavs, that is to say, Poles and Czechs, and southern Slavs, or Serbians, and Bulgarians. Probably, since time immemorial, all of these were one people who lived, as scattered tribes, in the wide area between the Carpathian Mountains and the Dnieper and Vistula Rivers (the latter in today's Poland). That people must have spoken one common Slavonic language. But then, at a time unknown, the Slavs evidently split into their present branches, and their tongues differentiated. There still remains, however, a good deal of affinity between the languages of these various Slavic peoples. For instance, the original Slavonic roots of words still survive in all these languages. Hence, it is much easier for a Russian, or a Pole, to learn, say, Czech or Serbian than it is for him to learn any non-Slavic tongue, such as French, Spanish or English.

What were the Eastern, that is to say, Russian Slavs doing in the first centuries of our era? Historians know little about it. For that period they have no better sources of information than coins or primitive tools found in some ancient grave; or the names of various rivers and localities, or a stray word dropped by some Greek or Roman chronicler. It is only since the eighth and ninth centuries A.D. that the early destinies of the Russian Slavs begin to emerge out of the prehistoric mist.

At that time Russian tribes occupied most of the Dnieper basin (except for its southernmost part) and the wooded country north of that river, up to the shores of the Baltic Sea. They lived chiefly along the rivers. And they called themselves neither Slavs nor Rus-



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The main street of Kiev









Volga boatmen, from an etching by Repin

A modern section of Tashkent





Typical Russian
country scene



Village children
going home from
school



At the foot of Mount Kazbek
in the Caucasus



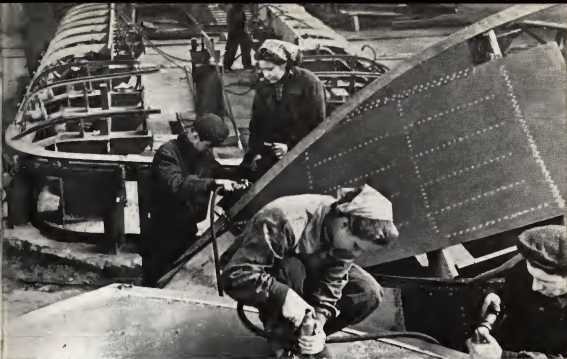
An old *aul* (village) in the Caucasus



Harvester-combine used
in fields of northern Russia

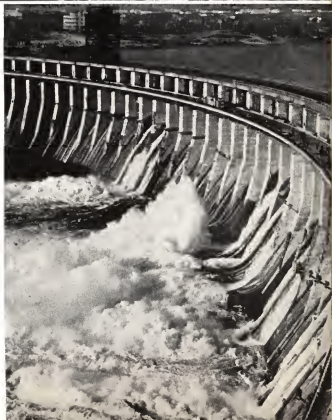


Farm workers in
central Russia



USSR MAGAZINE SOVFOTO

Airplane factory



Dnieper Dam at Zaporozhye



SOVPOTO

Catherine the Great



SOVFOTO

St. Basil Cathedral in Moscow



SOVPOTO

The Kremlin, Moscow



SOVFOTO

Oil wells on the Caspian Sea



SOVFOTO

Red Square, Moscow



SOVFOTO

Chemistry lesson in a Moscow school

Laika, ready for a trip into space in a sputnik

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A Siberian Hunter

sians, but took their names from the character of the regions in which they dwelt. Thus, the tribes occupying the open country west of the Dnieper were known as *Polyane*, or "people of the field." Above them, in the woods, lived *Drevlyane*, or "people of the trees," and so forth.

The chief pursuits of these early Russians were hunting and fishing. Occasionally, they burned out a patch of woods and sowed some grain in the clearing. But it is only later that agriculture acquired any real importance for them. They were heathen. They deified the forces of nature, such as the sun or thunder, and worshiped idols which were meant to represent these forces. Human sacrifices were also made before these idols.

By the beginning of the ninth century, the Russian Slavs had at least two cities, or, rather, large village-like settlements, where the natives and also some of the foreigners came to barter. One of these cities was Kiev. The other, quite as important, was Novgorod, which lay on the shore of Lake Ilmen, some 150 miles south of the present-day Leningrad. Like Kiev, Novgorod still exists; it is now a provincial city counting some 90,000 inhabitants.

Russian Slavs of that day had neither a state nor a regular government of any kind. They lived by tribal order. A few related families obeyed their senior member, or chieftain. The chieftains of several such family groups would get together in a *vyeche*, or assembly, and make decisions on matters which concerned the entire tribe. But neighboring tribes would not be bound by that decision. It was only contact with foreign peoples that prompted the disjointed Russian tribes to fuse together and form a state. These foreign peoples were, primarily, the Varangians.

Russian Slavs called the Norsemen who lived in Scandinavia Varangians. The famed Norse vikings, or sea rovers and pirates, were especially active at that time. Fearless fighters and excellent

navigators, they were dreaded wherever their swift boats appeared. And they appeared all along the coasts of Western Europe. They invaded and subjugated a large part of England, attacked Scotland, Ireland and France time and again and even raided Naples and other Italian cities.

The Russian Slavs were too poor and lived in communities too scattered to offer attractive opportunities for plunder. There was, however, something else which drew the vikings' attention to these Slavs.

In the southeastern part of Europe and in Asia Minor, lay the great and immensely rich Eastern Roman Empire. Its population was chiefly Greek. Constantinople, or Byzantium, its capital, out-did in wealth, splendor and refinement all other European cities. It was a worthy prize for the vikings. But it was difficult to get at it from the west. Indeed, to attack it from that quarter, the Norse raiders would have had to sail around Europe and across the Mediterranean Sea. Moreover, their boats could easily be stopped by the Greeks in the narrow Dardanelles on the southern approach to Constantinople. A much shorter and better way to it lay across the land of the Russian Slavs.

From the Baltic Sea, boats could sail up the Neva River to Lake Ladoga and thence, by the Volkhov River, to Novgorod on Lake Ilmen. Lovat River, flowing from the south, drains into the latter. Sailing from Novgorod up that river, one could reach the vicinity of the head source of the Dnieper. Here, boats had to be put on wooden wheels and hauled a short distance overland. Once on the Dnieper, the passage down its broad course was easy and convenient. True, some distance below Kiev there was one more obstacle. Near Zaporozhye (where centuries later the Soviet Government built the great dam), there were perilous rapids on the river. But here, again, an overland haul could be managed. From a point be-



low the rapids, a journey along the lower Dnieper and across the Black Sea took one to the Greek shore close to Byzantium.

The Russian Slavs called that route "the great route from the Varangians to the Greeks." For that was the route the vikings had selected for their contacts with the Byzantine Empire.

In the early ninth century the vikings started to trade with the

Greeks. But in 860, descending to the Black Sea by the same "great route," they attacked Constantinople. They proved unable to take it. But, to placate these dangerous raiders, the Byzantines paid them a ransom and concluded a treaty of peace with them.

Sailing up and down the Russian rivers, and stopping at Novgorod and Kiev, naturally brought the Norsemen into close touch with Russian Slavs. What the nature of these contacts was is not quite clear. Apparently, there was some trading. Probably, there was some fighting too. However it may have been, a remarkable event happened. Somewhere around 860, a viking leader whom the Russian Slavs called Ryurik, and whose real name in old-Scandinavian was Hroerekr, became Prince of Novgorod. He moved in there with his brothers, other relations and a troop of warriors.

Just how did this happen? Two centuries later, the learned Russian monk, Nestor, whose remains now rest in the catacombs of the Lavra Monastery at Kiev, gave the following account of the event in his chronicle: The Varangians used to come "from beyond the sea," fight the people of Novgorod and make them pay heavy ransoms. Eventually, the Novgoroders got tired of it. They rose against the raiders, defeated them and chased them away. But after that, trouble began in the Novgorod land. One tribe rose against another, blood was shed, and injustice prevailed. Exasperated, the Novgoroders decided that they must have a prince who would put an end to this disorder. And so their ambassadors went to the Varangian tribe *Rus* and said: "Our land is large and plentiful, but there is no order in it. Come back, then, to reign and rule over us." Among the chieftains of the *Rus*, Ryurik was the one who accepted that offer.

Father Nestor's story may be true only in part. In writing of what had happened 200 years before his time, he had to rely solely on oral tradition. As that tradition was handed down from father to

son, quite a few distortions and embellishments are likely to have crept into it. Thus, modern historians doubt very much that any embassy had ever been sent by the Novgoroders to the Norsemen. What may be taken as true in Nestor's narrative is this: Ryurik and his warriors did establish themselves at Novgorod, not by conquest, but by agreement with its people. Apparently, at first they visited the city on several occasions and did business with the Novgoroders. Eventually, the latter retained them for good as a sort of a hired army and as administrators.

The enthronement of Ryurik at Novgorod determined the course of all future Russian history.

History sheds little light on Ryurik's activities. But the record of his relative and immediate successor, Oleg (in old-Scandinavian, Helgi), is much better known. Oleg was a very strong and talented man. And he accomplished a job of immense importance. In part by war, in part by diplomacy, he extended his rule to the tribes of the Russian Slavs who lived south of Novgorod, around the little cities of Smolensk and Lyubech. Later, he approached Kiev. But Kiev was already under the rule of two viking warriors, Askold and Dir, who had deserted Ryurik's troop and somehow established themselves there. By some deceit, Oleg lured them out of their city, put them to death as "usurpers who were not of princely family" and took possession of Kiev.

Doubtless it was an unsavory deed. But from that moment on all Russian tribes were united for the first time into one state under the rule of one family. The Norse princes henceforth ruled over their new country as a family. The senior prince soon began to title himself "grand duke" and reign in the main city. His brothers, sons and nephews "sat," in order of seniority, in less important cities merely as princes. All of them were supposed to obey the grand duke. After Oleg's death in 912, Ryurik's son Igor (or

Ingvarr) became grand duke. He transferred his seat from Novgorod to Kiev. And Kiev henceforth remained the capital of the newly created state.

Igor still was a typical viking and was married to Olga (or Helga), a Scandinavian woman. But the later descendants of Rurik, and of his warriors, intermarried with Russians. After about 100 years, they had completely forgotten the Scandinavian tongue, spoke only Russian and thus had become fully Russianized. The Russians regarded them as their own native dynasty. And they ruled over Russia and made her history for the next 700 years.

The early Russian Slavs did not have the word "Russia," but they did call the Norse tribe, from which Rurik had come, Rus. Soon after the establishment of the Norse princes at Novgorod and Kiev, the natives began to designate, with the word Rus, their own country, and to call themselves Russians. Yet the noun "Russia" did not come into use until centuries later.

Thus, with the arrival of the vikings, Russia came into being. Her real history began.

Oleg was a rude and simple fighter. He spent much of his time in armor on horseback, defending his new country from various raiders, or raiding his neighbors himself. In these ventures success always accompanied him, for he was a fearless and talented military leader. While out of armor, he ruled over the country with shrewd and simple wisdom, the way a thrifty landowner runs his farm. To his subjects he was just and kind. And he greatly endeared himself to them. He became in their eyes the ideal of a *vityaz*, or knight. For centuries to come his deeds would be sung in the ballads and epic poems of Russian folklore.

His successor, Igor, lacked his talents. His unfairness and greed were greatly disliked by the people and, eventually, caused his undoing. The people of a city from which he had attempted to

collect twice the taxes they owed revolted and did him to death. Nestor, the chronicler, tells how Olga, Igor's widow, avenged the death of her husband. She approached the rebellious city with troops. The citizens shut themselves behind their wooden walls. But she made no attempt to fight them. Instead, she merely demanded that they pay a fine—three pigeons and three sparrows from each house.

Relieved by the unexpected lightness of the punishment, the citizens immediately complied with her demand. But when the birds were delivered, she ordered pieces of tarred tow to be tied to their feet. Then the tar was ignited, and the birds let loose. They naturally flew back to their nests in the city and started a terrific fire. Fleeing from it, the citizens threw open their gates and surrendered to Olga's warriors without a fight. She severely punished those responsible for her husband's death, but treated the rest of the citizens very kindly. That was the first proof of her great cunning and wisdom. Soon such proofs would be greatly multiplied. For Olga was to become an excellent and astute ruler, and very popular with her subjects. They and, after them, Nestor, called her "the wisest of women."

Unable to get over a good old viking habit, Russian princes sometimes raided Constantinople. Thus, in 907, Oleg laid waste Byzantium's suburbs, besieged it and exacted a large tribute from the Greeks. It was, incidentally, one of the deeds which built up his immense prestige with the Russians. But as time went on, trade with Byzantium acquired a much greater importance for the State of Kiev than war against it. Indeed, Russian life became increasingly dependent on that trade.

In winter, the grand duke of Kiev, accompanied by his officials and warriors, made a tour of his country. He checked on his sons and nephews who "sat" in subordinate principalities, dispensed

justice and, above all, levied taxes. These taxes were paid in money but chiefly in kind, that is to say, in furs, hides, foodstuffs, honey, wax. These goods were stocked along the nearby rivers, and in the spring, when the ice broke up, were floated to Kiev. Thus large masses of merchandise, in which Russia was rich, accumulated in the city. In the early summer, a fleet of long boats, each large enough to accommodate two to three tons of freight and forty to fifty men, gathered there. The caravan, protected by the prince's warriors, made ready to sail for Byzantium. A great many boats of private traders joined it, and it started off. Next spring the boats returned laden with silk, cloth, metal objects, wine, fruit and gold.

The Russian caravans did not always reach Byzantium without trouble. From time immemorial, the wide steppes south of Kiev served as a huge corridor through which various nomadic peoples moved from Asia to Europe. Shortly after Oleg's death, one of such peoples, the Petchenegs, surged westward across the steppe to the southern confines of Kiev-Russia. When, having reached the Dnieper's rapids above Zaporozhye, Russian boats were being tugged overland, the Petcheneg hordes often would attack the Russians from ambush and try to plunder the caravan. On his way back to Kiev, Grand Duke Svyatoslav, Olga's son, was killed in one of these attacks—and the Petcheneg chieftain made a drinking cup out of his skull. But, as a rule, the grand duke's warriors were numerous and strong enough to ward off such raids, and the caravans usually got through.

Besides trading with Byzantium, the Russians began to do business, via the Danube River, with the Hungarian Kingdom in the West. Moreover, Russian boats sailed from Novgorod, by way of the Baltic Sea, to German ports. Finally, thriving trade was done also with the Khazars, an Asiatic people who, at that time, lived in the area between the lower Volga and the northern Caucasus. And

so from the four corners of the world much wealth began to flow to Kiev.

But it was not large material profit alone that Kiev drew from trade with Byzantium.

The Russians, and their princes of the tenth century, were as yet little more than barbarians clad in rough-spun shirts and hides. There was much brutality and cruelty in their lives. Their cities were mainly primitive wooden cabins and mud hovels. They had no written language, and so could not accumulate knowledge.

But when these barbarians came to Byzantium, they saw untold beauty, wealth and the refinement of what was then the greatest civilization on earth. They beheld four- and five-story-high stone houses, magnificent gardens and imperial palaces. Women with rouged and powdered faces wore gorgeous robes and jewels; men engaged in polite conversation with them.

Some of the Russians ventured into St. Sophia, Constantinople's most famed church. Here, under the greatest cupola in the world, they witnessed a divine service which nothing could surpass. The black and white robed clergy floated in the clouds of sweet smelling incense. The choir, hidden high in the recesses of the church, sang the glory of one God, and the sounds seemed to come from the heaven. Down below, the brilliantly attired crowd, including the Emperor and the Empress, piously knelt before that invisible God.

The Russians emerged from St. Sophia deeply impressed, and not by the magnificence of the display alone. Instinctively, they sensed an infinitely greater moral truth in Christianity than there was in their roughly carved idols on hilltops around Kiev before which cruel human sacrifices were made.

And so the civilizing influence of Byzantium, and the spirit of Christianity, began to penetrate Kiev. Many of Igor's warriors became converted to Christianity in the early tenth century. To-

wards the end of her days, the wise Olga embraced the Greek creed. In 957, she even went on a pious pilgrimage to Byzantium. In her conversations with the Emperor, she was aloof and very dignified. But to the Patriarch, or head of the Greek Church, she showed her unbounded reverence and respect. Olga tried to persuade Svyatoslav, her son, to become a Christian, but he refused. As he frankly admitted, he was afraid that it would make him unpopular with his warriors. For most of them still were heathens; and to the heathens of his day and race Christianity was, so to speak, a sissy religion.

However, Svyatoslav's son, Grand Duke Vladimir, not only embraced Christianity himself, but also Christianized his whole country.

Political considerations may have played a part in it. In order to raise his international prestige, Vladimir wanted to marry Princess Anna, sister of the Byzantine Emperor. At first, the Emperor refused. To force his hand, Vladimir besieged and took Chersones, a rich Byzantine colony in the Crimea. The Emperor raised a new objection. He could not, he said, give his sister in marriage to a heathen. Vladimir defeated that objection by causing the Greek clergy of Chersones to baptize him. Whereupon Princess Anna was sent to him, became his wife, and he restored Chersones to Byzantium.

But if even Vladimir's conversion to Christianity was a political rather than a religious action, it had consequences of immense importance. The prince returned to Kiev with Greek priests. The people of the city gathered along the Dnieper, stood in the water and were baptized. The old wooden idols were tossed into the river. Where they had stood, churches were soon to rise! Similar ceremonies were performed also in all other Russian principalities.

Christianity thus became Russia's official religion. That happened in 988 or 989.

In the beginning, many of the Russians failed to understand the new religion. Heathen superstitions and rituals survived in the remote corners of the country for some time to come. Soon, however, Russians became sincere and fervent believers. And for centuries unshakable religious faith gave them strength to bear with courage any calamity. Neither dying in battle, nor freezing in blizzards, would they feel lost or alone. God was with them, and they would enter His kingdom.

At that time, the Church was the main source of learning and of the arts in all countries of Europe. The monk or the priest, who must read the Scriptures, had to be literate. Hence, it was chiefly monks who were the educators, historians, architects, painters, mathematicians. Accordingly, the Greek monks imparted their knowledge to their Russian brethren. First of all, they gave the Russians an alphabet in which the latter could write in their native language. That alphabet had been composed some years earlier by the monk Cyril for the Bulgarians, to whom he had preached the Gospel. But it fitted also the requirements of the Russian language perfectly. Thus, the Russians were able to become literate, and the "Cyrillic" alphabet is used by the Russians to this day. The Greeks also brought to Kiev translations of the Bible, the Divine Liturgy and various religious works in the old-Slavonic (or old-Bulgarian) language, which the Russians easily understand.

Churches and monasteries began to crop up all over Russia. And they brought elements of learning, enlightenment and humanness even to the most remote corners of the realm. Thus, Christianity began to play an immense educational role in Russia. Moreover, the Greeks had initiated the Russian monks in the arts of architecture and icon painting. Icons are images of saints and scenes from

the Scriptures done on wooden boards. And the Russians proved to be remarkably talented pupils; they soon surpassed their teachers. Deviating from Byzantine models, they eventually evolved a magnificently original style of architecture of their own, and churches built by them are admired by the world to this day. Many ancient Russian icons, too, rate today among the greatest existing works of art.

Under the influence of Kiev's great international trade, and of Christianity, Russia made very swift progress. That progress made itself especially felt under Vladimir's son, Grand Duke Yaroslav, who reigned from 1019 to 1054.

When necessary, Yaroslav was a skilled and formidable fighter. Incidentally, he inflicted terrific defeats on the Petchenegs, so that henceforth they never again bothered Russian caravans to Byzantium. He was also a sincere Christian, a great statesman and an enlightened man. He was known and greatly respected by all monarchs of Europe and was bound to quite a few of them by family ties. His wife, Irene (Ingired), was a daughter of the King of Sweden. One of his sons married a cousin of Constantin Monomach, Emperor of Byzantium. And the husbands of his three daughters were, respectively, the King of France, Hungary and Norway.

Kiev had now grown to be a large, rich and beautiful city. And Yaroslav spared no expense in beautifying it. It was under him that the first great stone churches were built in his capital, including the Cathedral of St. Sophia which, to this day, majestically rears its ten golden cupolas to the sky. He was very fond of reading. Numerous translations from the Greek were made for him, and books in different Slavonic languages were bought for his library. But he also wanted his subjects to read. Hence, his library was placed in an outbuilding of St. Sophia and made accessible to all. It became the first public library in Russia. Besides, over twenty-four schools

functioned at Kiev under Yaroslav. He composed for his country a code of laws known as *Russkaya pravda*, or Russian Justice. It was remarkably humane. In heathen days, thieves were punished in Russia by having their arms chopped off, and murderers were lynched. Most of the punishments provided by Yaroslav's code were fines.

By that time a noble class had crystallized in Russia. It consisted of *boyars*—or the grand duke's senior statesmen belonging to the foremost families of the country—and other officials and of warriors. Some of the landed estates, owned by the prince and by the nobles, were worked by slaves. War prisoners were made slaves by the Russians. Besides, a freeman could lose his freedom by running into debt. But an overwhelming majority of Russian peasants remained free. The relations between Yaroslav and his subjects were simple and very democratic. His palace was just a fair-sized house with elaborately carved and painted ornaments over its entrance and on the window sills. Around it were a vegetable garden, stables, servants' quarters and farm buildings. Anyone could enter it with a request or a complaint. On some occasions, food and wine would be served in the courtyard of the palace to all freemen who wished to come. The grand duke and his boyars would sit on the porch with silver goblets filled with wine. And the day would end in dancing, singing and merrymaking, with the grand duke clapping his hands to the tempo of the music.

Russian history was begun remarkably well. In less than 200 years, the young State of Kiev had made great achievements. But soon these achievements were to be cruelly offset.

As long as the family of Rurik's descendants remained relatively small, it was easy for the grand duke of Kiev to keep his relatives in subordinate principalities in check. But as time went on, that family grew. Russia expanded sidewise; and the number of

subordinate principalities increased. Some of them, like those of Novgorod, Smolensk, Chernigov or Galich, became large and strong. And so subordinate princes began at times to disobey the grand duke. They would contest his right to the throne of Kiev, or even form alliances and rise in revolt against him. Yaroslav himself had to fight two of his brothers in order to establish himself at Kiev. After Yaroslav's death, such internecine wars among princes became frequent. Thus, at times, Russia split into partisan groups of principalities either hostile to, or even at war with, one another. That, of course, greatly weakened the country as a whole.

Meanwhile, shortly after Yaroslav's death, Asia disgorged yet another nomadic people onto the southern steppes of European Russia. This time it was the *Cumans*. They proved to be much stronger and more dangerous than the earlier Petchenegs. Their hordes, mostly mounted, struck again and again with great daring against the cities and villages of Kiev, Chernigov and Pereyasavl, sacked and burned them and abducted prisoners.

Had Russia then been as united as she was under Yaroslav, she might have coped with these Asiatics. But she was divided and weakened. At times, a few princes did unite to launch a campaign against the Cumans. But the latter often proved strong enough to defeat the Russians. And even when the Russians won victories, it helped little. Overpowered, the elusive Cumans skillfully disbanded, fled and, in a few months, struck at Russian cities again. The Cuman scourge became permanent. In 150 years, from 1061 to 1210, the Cumans made fifty major raids and innumerable minor ones on the southern Russian principalities. As for the Russian trade with Byzantium, it was completely disorganized by the raiders. The Russian caravans that got through at all did so only after severe fighting.

And so, deprived of the bulk of its foreign trade and bled white

by raiders, the principality of Kiev, once prosperous and happy, began to decline. It remained for some time the seat of the grand duke, at least in name. But its population, as well as that of Chernigov and of other southern centers, diminished. People had nothing to do there. By the end of the twelfth century, Kiev had ceased to be the unrivaled focal point of Russian national life.

The noblemen, traders and farmers migrated from Kiev in three different directions. Some went to the westernmost principalities of Volhynia and of Galich, at the foot of the Carpathian Mountains, where the Cuman raids did not reach. Others moved to Novgorod, which was also safe. Finally, still others pioneered northeast, into the woodlands of central Russia lying along the headwaters of the Volga and the Oka. These last formed a majority.

The first Russian pioneers had penetrated this section 150 years earlier and founded the small cities of Suzdal, Rostov, Vladimir. But soil here was far less fertile than in the rich Kiev area, and the climate more severe. Hence, as long as Kiev prospered, the principality of Suzdal, as it was called, was regarded as the least desirable in Russia. It was as one of the youngest princes in Ryurik's descent that Yury Dolgoruky got it, and founded here in 1147 yet another city—Moscow. Both Yury and his son Andrew proved to be good and shrewd masters. They built roads and new villages, cleared forests into farmlands and otherwise improved the country. Under Yury's descendants, the expanding Suzdal principality split into several principalities. When migration from the Kiev area began, the rulers of these principalities knew how to attract the settlers. And the settlers came willingly, knowing that these central Russian lands were well protected from Cuman raids by a thick belt of forests.

It is here, then, that Russian history so brilliantly begun and so brutally interrupted at Kiev had to make a fresh start.

That fresh start was a retrogression. For in the beginning central Russia was incomparably poorer than had been Kiev with its great trade, wide international contacts and civilizing influences. The struggle for life was very hard here and it had a brutalizing effect on the Russians. They unlearned in the new country much that they had learned in the days of Yaroslav. But they worked hard. Their cities, Vladimir, Rostov and Moscow, grew and gradually improved. First, and most promising, trade contacts were made by way of the Volga with the peoples of Asia. In areas cleared of forests new cities and principalities of Tver, Kostroma and Ryazan, cropped up.

But then a great catastrophe came.

By 1215, the great Mongolian conqueror, Genghis Khan, or "Heavenly Emperor," completed the conquest of northern China. Between 1218 and 1220, spreading horror and destruction around him, he crushed the peoples of Afghanistan and Central Asia and established himself as Samarkand. Shortly afterwards, he decided, for purely personal reasons, to punish the Cumans. With amazing speed, his armies crossed the Caucasus into the south-Russian steppes, and inflicted terrific defeats on the Cumans. Terrified, the Cuman chieftains galloped to their old enemies, the Russian princes, and begged them for help. Hitherto, the Russians had known nothing about the Tartars. (In Genghis Khan's great army, there were, besides Mongolians, a great many Tartars, Kirghiz, Uzbeks and other Turk peoples from Central Asia.) But the Russian princes felt that something very serious was afoot. If the new invaders were not checked, the Russians would have a far more formidable next-door neighbor than even the Cumans. Hence, the princes of Kiev, Chernigov and Galich promptly recruited troops and rode out into the steppes of the Don to meet the new enemy. They met Genghis

Khan's hordes on the banks of the Kalka River. They fought bravely. But the battle did not last long. The Russians and their Cuman allies were literally annihilated. Wounded, the Russian princes were made prisoners and tortured to death. That happened in 1223. But, having won that sweeping victory, Genghis suddenly turned back to Central Asia and vanished as quickly as he had appeared.

Depressed and bewildered, the Russians did not know what to think. But they did not have to wait long.

Shortly after his appearance on the Russian steppes, Genghis died. But the *Kurultai*, or assembly of Mongolian chieftains, entrusted Khan Batu, his grandson, with the job of conquering the entire European-Russian plain. Batu, with a yellow face which never smiled, narrow slanting eyes and drooping mustache, was as remarkable a strategist as his grandfather. He carefully prepared and trained an army of some 150,000 men, which for those times was an immense force. He definitely polished up his tactics, too. What was new to Russians in these tactics was that Batu's entire huge army fought on horseback. Both in Russia and in Western European countries, at that period, there were not enough horses for such luxury. Hence, as a rule, only noblemen fought on horseback, while simple retainers battled on foot, as infantry. That gave Batu the immense advantage of great mobility. He could always outmaneuver his opponents. And he could launch campaigns which, for those times, were real blitzkriegs. Besides, Batu's army was held together by an iron discipline. And, for storming wooden cities, his special troops hurled clay pots filled with oil and equipped with lighted fuses which started terrific fires.

And so, in 1237, sweeping westward with incredible speed, Batu's hordes appeared under the wooden walls of Ryazan and demanded submission and a ransom. The prince and the people of

Ryazan refused and fought manfully, but were quickly overpowered. Then, in turn, fell Moscow, Vladimir, Suzdal and Tver, and all were transformed into charred ruins. At Vladimir, besides numberless other victims, the Tartars massacred the entire family of Grand Duke Yury. The Grand Duke himself, who managed to raise a small troop of supporters, met Batu's horde shortly afterwards, but was defeated and fell on the field.

In the two following years, shedding rivers of blood, burning, sacking and abducting scores of thousands of prisoners, Batu conquered Chernigov, Kiev, Volhynia and Galich. His blitz lashed out even into Hungary and laid it waste.

Thus ravaged, the entire land of the Russian people lay under the Mongolian-Tartar yoke.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Czars

RUSSIA remained under the Tartar yoke for nearly 250 years. The first hundred years of it were especially hard.

Upon completing his conquest, Batu withdrew to the lower Volga and formed there a state called the Golden Horde. He did not dethrone those of the Russian princes who had survived the massacre of 1237-1240. If they recognized his sovereign authority, they could continue to rule over their principalities and even maintain military forces. He also allowed the Russian Church to continue in existence. But he left in Russia his officials with strong military detachments to check on the obedience of the princes and to collect the yearly tribute, or tax, which Russia had to pay him.

The tribute was very heavy, especially in the beginning. It bled white the country ravaged by the invasion. Tartar officials and their guards ill-treated and insulted the Russians. In some cities, the people rose against the oppressors and put them to death. Then strong armies came from the Golden Horde, and thousands were massacred and abducted as hostages. Hence, the princes themselves tried to prevent such unorganized resistance and helped the Tartars to raise the tribute. If, nevertheless, the revolts occurred, the princes humbly rode to the Horde to placate the Khan. Of course, all hated "the infidels." Russia's subjugation was an unbearable insult to the Russians' national pride. They lived in deep moral depression.

The period of the Tartar yoke was shorter and not so heavy in Russia's northwestern and westernmost principalities. They lay too far for the invaders to control. But other troubles arose in those regions. In the thirteenth century, the Swedes expanded, by way

of Finland, to the Baltic shore above Novgorod. The Germans also planted themselves on that shore, moving in from the west. Both seriously threatened Novgorod, and the Germans even conquered a large part of its lands. Farther south, Lithuanian tribes along Niemen River, which formerly had been wild and unorganized, fused into a large and strong state, the duchy of Lithuania. Profiting by the Russians' weakness under the Tartars, the dukes of Lithuania attacked Russia from the west. The principality of Smolensk fell in their hands. In 1340, they seized Kiev, and, later, Volhynia. Galich fell to the Poles. The people of these regions accepted the Lithuanian rule without resistance. Choosing between the two, they preferred it to the Tartar yoke. But Russia thus became dismembered; and in the future they would have good reason to regret it.

The great bulk of Russia remained, however, under the Tartars.

Divided many times, the principalities of central Russia had grown small. The princes squabbled and sometimes fought among themselves. Already before the Tartar invasion, the grand ducal seat had been moved from Kiev to Vladimir, then the largest city in central Russia. Now this, now that prince managed to seize Vladimir and thus become grand duke. But the title no longer meant much. The princes paid little attention to the grand duke. The feeling of Russia's unity, which had been so strong in the best years of the Kiev period, became dormant. The Church alone continued morally to support the Russians and to remind them that they were all one people.

But that dark time did not last long. The force which led Russia out of that depression was Moscow.

I have spoken of Moscow's location at the crossing of the vital waterways. Trade carried on along them gradually made the descendants of Yuri Dolgoruky—who continued to rule over the

principality of Moscow—much richer than other Russian princes. Attracted to its wealth, nobles and peasants flocked to Moscow from other principalities, and its population grew. The princes of Moscow were enabled to maintain larger military forces than their neighbors. They expanded their principality by appropriating some of these neighbors' lands and cities. Also, they now held Vladimir almost permanently, and thus were grand dukes as well. Around 1340, one of them, Grand Duke Ivan Kalita, persuaded the Khan to entrust him with collecting the tax for the Golden Horde from Russia. That diminished the interference by Tartars into domestic Russian affairs and made the yoke less oppressive. All Russians looked to Kalita with gratitude, and the prestige of Moscow grew.

After the middle of the fourteenth century, internal discord and wars had greatly weakened the Golden Horde. Mamay, a Tartar chieftain, managed to suppress them and to become Khan. Even so, the might of the Horde was no longer the same as it had been under Batu. That encouraged the Russians. They began at times to oppose their masters. On one occasion, avenging some injustice, they even sacked and burned some Tartar settlements. Khan Mamay realized that he was losing his grip on Russia and he decided to restore it. At the head of a huge army, he moved across the steppe towards Ryazan in order thence to strike against Moscow.

Grand Duke Dimitry ruled over Moscow then. He was a man of great vision and will power, and to shake off the Tartar yoke had been his dream since childhood. Upon getting wind of Mamay's movements, he asked other Russian princes for help. Only some of them sent it. A great many others preferred to "sit on the fence." But he knew that he would have to fight just the same, and that Russia's entire future depended on it. At the Troitsky Monastery near Moscow, he knelt in long prayer. Father Sergui (Sergius), the most revered of Russian monks, blessed him for his exploit. He rode

with his forces, which were considerable, but not large, southward, into the "wild steppe." He wanted to overtake Mamay before the latter had ravaged any Russian cities.

The Russians sighted the enemy east of the Don, in the region known as Kulikovo Field. Clouds of Tartar arrows flew, "so that the sun was obscured," and ripped holes in Russian ranks. Then the Tartars charged. A terrific *mêlée* ensued. In rivers of blood, the Russians fought with the grim determination of despair. But Mamay's army was much larger. Suffering huge losses, the Russians began to waver. Knocked off his horse, Dimitry himself lay unconscious on the field under some dead bodies. But before the beginning of the battle, he had placed a regiment, commanded by his cousin Andrew, in ambush. Now, when everything seemed to be lost, that regiment struck at the Tartars. Thrown into confusion, the Tartars fled and were cut to pieces. The Russian victory was complete. The entire Tartar camp with rich supplies fell in Russian hands. Mamay himself barely escaped with a few of his guards. That happened in 1380.

Dimitry's return to Moscow was a triumph. The people met him with tears of joy and with the pealing of church bells. But the jubilation was premature. Two years later, Khan Tokhtamysh, Mamay's successor, suddenly appeared in front of Moscow with a huge army. Taken by surprise, Dimitry could not resist him and retreated to the north. The Tartars burned and sacked the capital, and the Russians were obliged to pay them a tax for nearly a hundred years. Yet the battle of Kulikovo had given them faith in themselves and shown that the Tartars were not invincible. Tokhtamysh had won solely by surprise. In reality, Russian and Tartar forces were now evenly balanced. The Tartars also realized it and began to treat Russians leniently and with respect.

Dimitry's victory made the grand dukes of Moscow unrivaled

leaders of Russia in the eyes of the people. The aim which suggested itself to his successors was plain. It was "to gather" all Russian principalities into one state under the rule of Moscow, and the grand dukes accomplished it within the next hundred years. They did it by diplomacy and intermarriages; by buying the small principalities from the weaker princes; by fighting and defeating such of the strong princes as those of Novogorod, Tver, Rostov, who did not wish "to go under Moscow" of their own accord. In doing so, the grand dukes met with the support of the great mass of the Russian people. For the people knew that Moscow could defend them from any enemy much better than their former weak rulers. The princes who had submitted themselves to Moscow of their own accord retained landed estates in their former principalities. They also retained the princely title, and usually took surnames after the names of these estates, becoming Princes Vyazemsky, Beloselsky, Obolensky and the like. But they were henceforth only landowners, not rulers, in their former principalities. And they entered the grand duke's service as his *boyars* (senior statesmen, or the czar's advisers), other high officials and military commanders, forming the uppercrust of the noble class.

It was under Grand Duke Ivan III that "the gathering together" of Russian principalities was completed. By the end of his reign in 1505, Ivan was the sole master of all Russian lands which had been dependent on the Tartars. His new large state became known as the Grand Duchy of Muscovia. It took over 400 years to restore Russia's unity which had been lost with the splitting up of Yaroslav's realm. Nor was that unity completely reestablished—not yet. For, in the west, many areas inhabited by Russians, including those of Kiev, Smolensk, Volhynia, still remained separated from Moscow and lived under foreign, chiefly Lithuanian rule.

Ivan III was a shrewd statesman and a proud man. He was keenly

aware of his dignity as the sole master of Muscovia. It was under him that the most beautiful palaces were built within the Kremlin, some by Italian and others by Russian architects. He did something far more important, too. It was he who had definitely shaken off the last remnants of the Tartar yoke.

By that time, the Golden Horde became still further weakened. It continued to exist on the lower Volga, around the city of Astrakhan, but two large groups had separated themselves from it. One formed the Khanate (Kingdom) of Kazan far to the north, on the middle Volga. The other established itself in the Crimea. The united Muscovia was quite strong enough to deal with the Tartars. Hence, Ivan ceased paying any tax to the Golden Horde from the very beginning of his reign. When an ambassador brought to Ivan a letter from Khan Akhmat, the Grand Duke threw it on the floor, trampled it underfoot, and kicked the ambassador out. In 1480, Akhmat appeared with an army at Muscovia's eastern confines. Ivan also rode into the field at the head of a large force. The two opponents looked at each other across a small river which lay between them. Then Akhmat withdrew without delivering a battle.

That was the end of it. Henceforth, Muscovia was independent.

A short time before Russia's final emancipation from the Tartars, the Eastern Roman Empire had collapsed under the blows dealt it by another Asiatic people, the Turks.

The Turks had long since conquered Asia Minor, which had formerly belonged to that empire, and even occupied large parts of the Balkan Peninsula. And in 1453, they stormed its magnificent capital, Byzantium. Constantin Paleologus, last of the Emperors, fought manfully in the besieged city and fell when, ramming a hole through its ramparts, the invaders poured in. Amidst groans, blood

and fires, Sultan Mahommet II, the conqueror, rode on his steed into St. Sophia and impressed his hand, covered with Christian blood, on one of its walls.

To the Russians, it was a terrific shock. It was from Byzantium that the light of Christianity had come to them. Ever since, they always regarded it as the spiritual home of the entire Eastern Church (that Church and the Western, or Roman, Church had long since drifted apart). The thought that Islamic crescent, and not the Christian cross, sparkled henceforth over the dome of St. Sophia, filled them with dismay and horror. But there was also something else in Russian minds. Many Russians, especially the monks, felt that, if the Emperors of Byzantium had gone down, it was up to the rulers of Moscow "to pick up the torch" and become the defenders and protectors of the Eastern Christianity. It had so happened that Princess Sophia, niece of Constantin Paleologus, had escaped her father's sad fate. She was taken to Rome, and eventually Grand Duke Ivan III of Muscovia married her. Some Russian thinkers saw in it a meaningful omen. With Sophia, they held, the sacred role and crown of the Emperors of Byzantium had come to Moscow and to its ruling dynasty.

Accordingly, in 1547, when Ivan III's grandson and namesake, Ivan IV, came of age, he proclaimed himself not only Grand Duke, but also Czar (for the Russians called the emperors of Byzantium czars). He also had himself crowned. The ceremony of coronation, copied on the magnificent Byzantine ritual, was performed with great splendor and in the presence of immense crowds in the Cathedral of the Assumption, in the Kremlin. The man who thus became Russia's first Czar would later win world-wide fame as Ivan "the Terrible." The coronation was by no means a simple formality. Ivan IV himself and the breathless, awe-struck crowds that packed the cathedral—all of them deeply religious—took it very much in

earnest. Russia was raised by it to a new lofty status. Her new ruler was henceforth a "God's anointed." Like the emperors of Byzantium, he would rule "by the Grace of God" as an autocrat, that is to say, absolute, unlimited monarch. Both for his deeds and misdeeds, he would be responsible to the Almighty alone.

In the beginning, there was nothing "terrible" about Czar Ivan. To the contrary, in the first half of his reign, he won the warmest love of his subjects.

Ivan was a tall, broad-shouldered man with a lean, bearded face, hooked nose and piercing, restless eyes. He was one of the best read and educated men of his time. Besides his native tongue, he spoke fluently seven languages, including Greek, Italian, Lithuanian, Polish. He had in him the mettle of a born statesman with a vigorous, astute mind. And his political foresight was extraordinary. In many ways, he anticipated the ideas of Peter the Great. Moreover, he was an indefatigable worker and burned with a sincere and earnest will to do good to his people.

He lived in grandeur in the Kremlin, never being seen save in the magnificence of cloth of gold and gems, or scarlet and sables. But he was accessible to all. The poorest man in Muscovia could come to the Czar with a petition, and he would be kindly received. Moreover, he was the first ruler of Muscovia who convened the *Zemsky Sobor*, or assembly of representative men of the czardom. An autocrat, yes. But he was eager to know the wishes and needs of his subjects. The Sobor of 1550 helped him to work out wise and very important internal reforms. For instance, the courts of justice, formerly slow and corrupt, were immensely improved by the introduction into them of elected jurors. From the Sobor of 1566, he sought and received advice on the continuation of an important war against Lithuania. Neither tortures, nor executions marred those years, and yet Ivan was obeyed as none other. People let their hair

grow if they had incurred the Czar's displeasure and walked down-cast until he smiled on them again.

Then an amazing change came over Ivan. In 1564, under the threat of abdicating the throne, he demanded from the citizens and clergy of Moscow that they give him the right "to punish traitors" without resorting to normal trial. The demand was immediately acceded to. And then arrests and executions, such as the Muscovites had never seen before, began. Human heads fell by the score under the executioner's ax. Those who passed in the Red Square by the Zastenok section of the Kremlin wall, daily heard groans and screams from its dark, narrow embrasures. It was there that the victims of Ivan's strange blood-lust were tortured. Thus, Ivan actually became "the Terrible."

What was it that lay behind that change?

There was a tendency toward suspiciousness and streaks of great cruelty in Ivan's character from infancy. But theretofore he kept them in check. He was greatly helped in it by his meek young wife Anastasia, of the ancient boyar family of Romanovs, whom he dearly loved. Her very presence had a remarkably good and soothing effect on him. But in 1560, Anastasia died under strange and obscure circumstances. Ivan was disconsolate and suspected, probably without reason, that she had been poisoned by his "enemies." The suspicion estranged him from the boyars, who had been his lifelong friends. New and obscure companions took their place. The Czar began to drink heavily. Long fasts and prayers (for he remained very religious) alternated with wild orgies. Also, he took one new wife after another, but soon tired of them and relegated them to convents. And his inborn cruelty, long suppressed, got the better of him. His face darkened. His fits of temper became uncontrollable. He took pleasure in being present at tortures and executions and in seeing human suffering. At moments, he realized that

he was "a despicable sinner" and suffered from remorse. But he no longer could master himself.

And yet, Ivan was no maniac, no madman. In his executions, there was a system. His wrath seldom touched the poor and the humble. It struck almost exclusively the uppermost men of the czardom's nobility—the princes and the great untitled boyars.

Under Ivan's predecessors, they had been very influential. They virtually shared the power with the grand duke. In all important matters, the latter heeded the advice of the Council of Boyars. Ivan, however, held that, as a crowned czar, he alone must wield the power, for it was he who was solely responsible for his people before God. Hence, he often disregarded the aristocratic Council and sought instead the support of the democratic Sobor (Assembly). The boyars, he believed, must be no more than his servants or assistants. That infuriated some of them. The princes, in particular, remembered that their own forefathers had been independent rulers. Moreover, they were the Czar's kinsmen: they were descended, like him, from Ryurik. And so, in some of Moscow's boyar houses, there had long since been a great deal of grumbling against the Czar.

In 1564, Prince Andrew Kurbsky, one of Ivan's ablest *voyevodas* (military commanders) quarreled with him. Fearing the Czar's wrath, he fled to Lithuania, which was then at war with Muscovia, and entered the service of the Lithuanian grand duke. Moreover, thence he sent to the Czar a letter filled with bitter reproaches over the latter's "unfair and cruel" treatment of boyars. Kurbsky's disaffection was a terrific shock to Ivan. He henceforth began to suspect of treason and of plotting the whole princely and boyar class, which he long since hated. It was then that he secured from the people of Moscow a permission to punish "traitors" without a trial. For he deliberately decided to break the political power of the

aristocratic class by a campaign of executions and banishments. It was then that blood started flowing in rivers.

Most, or even all, of Ivan's victims were absolutely innocent. Even those of them who did grumble, had never plotted any treason. Yet, horrible and hideous as Ivan's methods had been, he achieved the aim he was after.

By the end of his reign, the old Muscovite aristocracy was terrorized and humiliated. Its strength was largely shattered. Moreover, its wealth was very considerably reduced. The families which Ivan's wrath struck had owned immense hereditary estates in the central parts of Muscovia. Upon their execution or banishment, these estates were taken over by the Czar's government, divided into smaller units and given in temporary tenure to poorer and less important nobles. These nobles were to hold them only so long as they served the czardom. Thus, alongside of the surviving families of the old aristocracy, there appeared a whole large class of minor nobility, or gentry, on whom Ivan could safely rely. For these new men had no hereditary ambition to share the Czar's power. Whatever wealth they were allowed to hold, came to them from him as a remuneration for their service. Consequently, they were absolutely loyal to him—and that was what he wanted.

In the last years of Ivan's life, executions subsided. But his cruelty and uncontrollable temper remained the same. That temper was responsible for the greatest tragedy of his life. The Czar tenderly loved his elder son, Czarevich Ivan. But once, momentarily infuriated over some argument, he struck the young man on the head with a heavy, pointed iron staff which he always carried. The Czarevich collapsed, his skull fractured, and died in a few days. When the Czar realized what he had done, he was in agony from woe and repentance. Months went by, but he never got over it. In the night, he walked sleepless about the palace, as though seeking the presence

of him whom his own hand had killed. The Czar died in 1584, at the age of fifty-four, the unhappiest of men.

During his reign, Ivan had shown both how good and how horrible an autocrat can be.

But, strange as it may seem, he remained immensely popular with the great majority of the Russian people even in the worst years of his cruelty. He appeared to the poor and the humble not as a tyrant, but as their mighty protector, as a source of unfailing justice and as a great czar who, in the dazzling splendor of the Kremlin, always pitied them and thought of their needs. For centuries, they sang of him and his reign in glowing words, in no end of folk songs.

In the early years of Ivan's reign, the Tartar Khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan on the Volga, which had survived the Golden Horde, still remained painful thorns in Muscovia's flesh. For the Tartars kept raiding the exposed eastern part of the country. Hence, the Czar marched against these two Khanates and promptly conquered them. His army, reënforced by new "fusilier" regiments and artillery (powder was already in existence), proved to be very strong. Ivan treated the captured Tartars with generosity. Their chieftains became Christians and were made noblemen of Muscovia. A great many Tartars live around Kazan to this day.

These two conquests brought to a happy conclusion the centuries-long struggle between the Russians and the Asiatic Tartar world. The Crimean Tartars alone yet continued to annoy Muscovia for another two hundred years. But in the eastern confines of the czardom, peace set in. Moreover, the entire Volga region with immense expanses of fertile soil was opened for the first time to Russian settlers. Ivan wisely helped and encouraged the pioneers who went there. And soon the czardom received growing amounts of grain, cattle and fish from the new country.

Ivan also waged difficult wars in the West, against far stronger enemies than the Tartars.

The Germans of the "Livonian Order" completely corked up the trade which Russia had formerly carried on, by way of Novgorod and of the Baltic Sea, with Western Europe. Ivan held that that trade was vital to Russia. The development of Western European nations had never been delayed by the Tartar yoke. Their civilization was more advanced than Russia's. And Ivan was one of the first Russians who realized that Muscovia had a great deal not only to buy, but also to learn, from them. It was for that reason that he warmly welcomed foreigners to Moscow. He was, for instance, very happy when an English ship arrived in northern Russia via the White Sea. He even built there the port of Archangel in order to promote Muscovia's trade with England. Yet, due to the inconvenience of the route, that trade was carried on only on a small scale. The only convenient route for Russia's foreign commerce lay through the Baltic. And so, Ivan attacked the Livonian Germans in order to wrest the Baltic shore from them.

Ivan's *voyevodas* (commanders) promptly defeated the Germans and almost completely pushed them out of the entire Baltic area. But at that point, Sweden and Lithuania came to their aid by attacking Ivan. Sweden was afraid to have Muscovia as her neighbor on the Baltic shore. And between Lithuania and Muscovia, there were old scores to settle. Lithuania still held Kiev, Volhynia, White Russia and other ancient Russian lands which she had seized shortly after Batu's invasion. The grand dukes of Moscow never gave up their claim to these lands. Hence, Russia and Lithuania were almost always enemies.

At first, Ivan's armies proved strong enough to handle these two new opponents. They skillfully defended themselves against the Swedes and inflicted terrific defeats on the Lithuanians. But, in

desperation, Lithuania entered upon a union with Poland and the two formed a powerful Polish-Lithuanian Kingdom. Thus, Ivan found himself at war with a coalition of four States—Sweden, Lithuania, Poland and the remnants of the German Order! And he was overpowered.

Stephen Batory, the talented new Polish-Lithuanian King, inflicted serious defeats on the Russians. All that mass of fighting went on for twenty years. Muscovia was exhausted. Ivan realized it and had to agree to an unfavorable peace.

But Ivan's clear vision of Russia reaching the Baltic shore and winning back the "stolen" Russian lands was taken up by his successors. Through a number of wars and heavy sacrifices, later czars succeeded where Ivan had failed. Kiev, "the mother of Russian cities," was restored to Russia in 1667 by Czar Alexis. Later still, at different times, other Russian provinces were won back. And in the early eighteenth century, Peter the Great conquered the Baltic shore and founded St. Petersburg on it, which goes to show once more how remarkable the Terrible Czar's statesmanlike foresight was.

During Ivan's reign, there appeared a new group in Russia's population, of which you have often heard—the Cossacks. Though the Cossacks are Russians, the word is of Tartar origin. It means "men of the frontier." Indeed, the part which they played in Russian life was much like that of our own men of the frontier in Tennessee, Kentucky and the Northwest Territory, in the '20's of the past century.

The Cossacks were daring adventurers, peasants who found their lot too hard, and fugitives from justice who went beyond the eastern, southeastern and southwestern borders of Muscovia into the "wild field" that lay between it and other nations. There, they founded groups of settlements of their own and were referred to,

after the name of the region, as Ural, Don, Kuban and Dnieper Cossacks. Thus, Muscovia became surrounded along its fringes with a whole set of little Russian republics. For these were republics. The czardom's laws had no force among the Cossacks. Each geographical Cossack group was ruled by its own elected Circle (Assembly) and *ataman*, or chieftain. All Cossacks were equals. Life in their settlements was free, unruly and colorful. They lived chiefly by war and plunder. For the Cossacks of the Don constantly raided the peoples of the Northern Caucasus and were raided by them. Those of the Dnieper skirmished with the Crimean Tartars and sacked again and again Lithuanian and Polish provinces.

Ivan and most other czars kept on good terms with the Cossacks. For these unruly men were Russia's advanced pioneers in the "wild field." And whenever Muscovia was engaged in war with the Polish-Lithuanian Kingdom, they always acted as her irregular allies.

In the last years of Ivan's reign, the existence of the Cossacks unexpectedly yielded important dividends to Muscovia. A Tartar chieftain named Kuchum had founded east of the Urals, on Irtysh River, a little state called Khanate of Siberia. From it, he began to raid Russian settlers on the Volga. Yermak, a leader of Ural Cossacks, came in touch with Kuchum's bands. Yermak had but 840 men. But he struck at the Tartars with such dash and skill that, taken by surprise, they were routed out of their Khanate. Yermak sent word about it to the Czar. Ivan was elated. He dispatched rich gifts to Yermak and, also, strong army units to support him. It was so that the conquest of Siberia was begun. For the Muscovites started calling the whole immense country east of the Urals after the name of Kuchum's Khanate.

In the eighteenth century, when the growing Russian Empire expanded in all directions and, in particular, reached the Black Sea, the

little Cossack states were incorporated into it. Even after it, they long retained their own local government. And the Cossacks form to this day separate units in the Soviet Army, swift, daredevil and hard hitting.

The kind, but weak and incapable Czar Fyodor, Ivan's second son, died in 1598 without issue. The Terrible Czar's last son, Dimitry, lost his life in an accident at the age of nine. Thus, the dynasty of the grand dukes and czars of Muscovia became extinct.

Boris Godunov, who had been one of Ivan's favorite assistants, rose to the throne. He was a strong and astute man, and he meant well for the people. The Muscovites, however, intensely disliked him. They believed, probably unjustly, that he had deliberately engineered the accident in which little Dimitry, who ought to have become Czar, had perished. Meanwhile, there appeared in Poland a young man who claimed that he was Dimitry. He had, he maintained, miraculously escaped "the assassins hired by Boris," while another boy was killed and buried in his place. With Polish help, he recruited a small army and marched against Moscow to win back the throne of his forefathers. At that point, Czar Boris died. The very shadow of Ivan the Terrible (or of his son) still carried such immense prestige with the Russians that they did Boris Godunov's son to death and joyfully enthroned the would-be Dimitry in the Kremlin.

But soon they were bitterly disappointed. It was ascertained that "Czar Dimitry" was a fake, and a disreputable one, at that. He misbehaved, paid no attention to the Church, married a Polish woman and allowed the Poles to behave like masters in Moscow. The Muscovites revolted and killed him.

Two years of terrific anarchy set in. There were several pretenders to the throne, and bloody civil wars began. The Cossacks

added to the mess by producing their own pretender, the second fake Dimitry. Cossack and other bands plundered whole cities and provinces. Famines raged. Profiting by it, the Poles seized Moscow and raised Prince Vladislav, son of their King, to the Russian throne.

The Polish intervention helped the Russians, tired of the anarchy, to come back to their senses. At Nizhny Novgorod (now called Gorky) on the Volga, two patriots, Prince Pozharsky and simple townsman Minin, began to raise a people's army in order to put an end to the disorder. The Church strongly supported them. Money and volunteers poured to them from other cities. Soon Prince Pozharsky found himself at the head of a large force, and he was a good commander. After much fighting, the Poles were defeated and expelled from Russia. The garrison they had left in Moscow capitulated after a long siege.

When order was restored, Pozharsky, Minin and their faithful assistant, Prince Trubetskoy, convened the same kind of Sobor (Assembly) as Ivan the Terrible used to convene. People of all classes and regions were represented in it. Its job was to elect a new czar. There still were a great many princes of Rurik descent in Russia. One of them might have been a natural candidate for the throne. But, on the other hand, if, say, a Prince Shuisky or Belsky had been elected, Rurik's other numerous offspring might become jealous, gather supporters, and new civil wars would start.

Hence, the Sobor ruled out the Rurik princes. Instead, it unanimously offered the crown to young Michael Romanov. There were strong reasons for the choice. The Romanovs were an ancient boyar family with an exceptionally good record. Michael's grand-aunt, Anastasia, had been Ivan the Terrible's first and much beloved wife. The Russians still revered her memory. Moreover, Metropolitan Filaret, the young man's father, was one of the most respected Rus-

sian clergymen. He had opposed the Poles with great patriotism and courage and was still a Polish prisoner. At the moment of his election, Michael Romanov lived far from Moscow, in the Ipatiev Monastery. The youth was modest, clean-minded and unambitious. He long refused the crushing responsibility and honor that were being forced on him. But the Sobor persisted. Only after having been convinced that Russia actually wanted him to wear the crown of Czar Ivan did he arrive in Moscow. The bells of Moscow's forty-times-forty churches pealed, and jubilant crowds roared with joy when he rode into the city.

Thus, for better or for worse, Russia entrusted her destiny to the Romanov dynasty. That happened in 1613. The Romanovs ruled over Russia for three hundred years, until the Revolution of 1917.

CHAPTER SIX

The Emperors

IN THE seventeenth century, a great and old misfortune of Russia's national life began to make itself felt with especial strength. Compared to the countries of Western Europe, Muscovia was a very backward land.

In the West, learning, arts and sciences had long since become secularized, that is to say, separated from religion, and developed freely and rapidly. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, they blossomed forth into a golden age of unusual fruitfulness and splendor. But in Muscovia, the picture was entirely different. The little culture the Russians could boast had come to them from Byzantium, between the tenth and the thirteenth centuries. For those times, it was all right. The eleventh-century Kiev Russia of Grand Duke Yaroslav was quite up-to-date then. But since then, Muscovia had made little, if any, headway. And by the seventeenth century she had fallen in her development three or four centuries behind the nations of the West.

Indeed, while England and France produced Shakespeare, Molière and Ronsard, other great writers and incomparable theatre, in Russia the very word "literature" as yet remained unknown. There existed only beautiful, but primitive folklore. "Learned" Muscovites still had little to read but ancient religious books. In Western Europe, great mathematicians—Newton in England, Leibnitz in Germany, and others—had already formulated modern mathematics. The Russians knew only primitive arithmetic, and had no idea of any science. Russian boyars and nobles still wore old Byzantine-fashion beards, long, robelike coats, tall, inconvenient

caps. To show their dignity, they moved about slowly, supported by servants. In contrast to the brilliant social life of the West, hardly any such life existed in Muscovia. For women were virtually excluded from it. Since the times of the Tartar domination, they lived half-secluded in their *terems* (women's quarters).

Russia's cultural backwardness was due to a variety of causes. The two centuries of the Tartar yoke badly arrested her development and isolated her from the civilizing influence of general European life. When that yoke was shaken off, Byzantium, the old headsource of Russian culture, lay conquered by the Turks, so that the Russians could no longer get anything from it. Moreover, a certain amount of material wealth is required for the development of culture. Meanwhile, circumstances compelled Muscovia to do more fighting for self-preservation, or for the recuperation of lost provinces, than any western nation ever did. For instance, out of the one hundred years from 1500 to 1600, fifty years were taken up by very difficult wars against Lithuania, Poland and Sweden alone. There was also the warding off of frequent raids by Crimean Tartars and fighting against other Tartars in the East. These wars chronically drained Muscovia's material resources. Besides, fighting with Lithuania, Poland and Sweden created a physical barrier which automatically isolated Muscovia from Western Europe.

Muscovia's stagnation was becoming increasingly dangerous to the Russian people. The Western nations produced not only great thinkers, but also industrial techniques which were far ahead of those known in Moscow. The Germans or the Dutch smelted metals, produced firearms and built various instruments infinitely better than the Russians. Their military tactics and equipment had also long since surpassed those of Russia. It was for that reason that struggle against such a Western nation as Sweden was becoming increasingly difficult for Muscovia.

Already Ivan the Terrible was aware of Russia's backwardness. The first two Romanov Czars, Michael and his son Alexis, also understood it. They invited an increasing number of foreign experts to Muscovia and paid them high salaries. English and German doctors were employed under these czars as court physicians. The first drugstore was opened by foreigners in Moscow; the first modern steel foundry and gun casting plant was set up by them at Tula. Foreigners, too, were hired to train Muscovite fusilier regiments. A whole German suburb grew up near Moscow, and a thousand foreigners lived in it. (The Muscovites used the word "Germans" for all foreigners of Protestant confessions.) But these measures were drops in the bucket. Far greater reforms were required in order to boost Russia to the level of Western civilization.

Great obstacles stood on the path of such reforms. At that time, the czars were progressive. So were some of the leading boyars, among whom there were a few enlightened and Western-minded. But most noblemen and clergy, let alone the common people, looked at foreign ways with enmity. They saw in them something un-Christian, almost a betrayal of religion. It was especially so when foreign ways came from Roman-Catholic countries. For there was an old enmity between the Eastern and the Roman Churches. Things foreign were objected to less strongly when they came from Protestant, or Reformed, lands, such as Germany, Holland, England. Hence, chiefly nationals of those lands were invited to Muscovia. Yet, they were objected to even in that case. For instance, the Muscovites grumbled a good deal when the Western-minded Boyar Matveyev organized a theatre in his home and when Czar Alexis attended and enjoyed the performances. To look at the theatricals, appeared as almost a sin to most Muscovites. Long stagnation made the minds of many Russians obtuse and filled them with prejudice.

Thus, there seemed to be no possibility of any serious changes in sight when, in 1689, the towering figure of Peter the Great rose to the throne.

That immense man, with a round, typically Russian face contracted by a nervous twitch, with muscles of steel and with the physical and mental energy of a regiment of men, accomplished in thirty-six years the seemingly impossible. His reign swept like a tornado over Russia. By a superhuman effort, by a series of drastic, revolutionary reforms, he switched Muscovia to the lines of "Europeanism." Moreover, tireless himself (he never slept more than four or five hours a night and often not at all), he violently shook, shocked and punched his huge land out of its centuries-long somnolence. The result was that when, in 1725, he died at the age of 53, his purpose had been accomplished. The old-fashioned Muscovite Czarism of his ancestors was no more. Instead, there arose the new Empire of St. Petersburg, which was a typical State following the Western European pattern. That State henceforth occupied a place of great importance in the European politics.

Peter's early career was unusual. He was the youngest son of Czar Alexis by the latter's second wife. When Alexis's elder son and successor died, Peter was ten years old. He was proclaimed Czar, but Czarevna Sophia, his ambitious half-sister, was made regent and decided to usurp the throne. Her supporters broke into the Kremlin and, in Peter's presence, massacred his mother's relations and other men of his party. Whereupon the boy-Czar was banished with his mother to an out-of-town palace in the village of Preobrazhenskoye, near Moscow. There, he was allowed to play in the fields like a mere boyar boy, while Sophia reigned.

In his exile, Peter received little of the old-fashioned, mediæval religious education that was usually given to czars. He remained a poor speller for the rest of his life. But, instinctively, he provided

an education for himself, after his own taste. Preobrazhenskoye happened to lie near the German suburb of Moscow. Little Peter made friends with some of the foreigners living there and came informally to their homes. His mind was amazingly keen and inquisitive. He trembled with interest at the sight of each new instrument. On his own initiative, his foreign friends gave him lessons in mathematics and other subjects. General Gordon, a Scotchman employed in the Muscovite army, taught him fortification and artillery. These smatters of knowledge which he eagerly grasped sufficed for the unusual boy to sense the difference between the old Muscovite ways and the Western thought and the immense advantages of the latter.

Moreover, out of hundreds of noble and peasant boys with whom Peter played in the fields, he organized two regiments which he named Preobrazhensky and Semyonovsky, after the nearby villages. Sophia saw no harm in these "amusements of Preobrazhenskoye stable boys," as she haughtily called them, and allowed them to get some powder and firearms from the Moscow armory. But the fourteen-year-old Peter revealed an unusual seriousness in that boyish undertaking. With Gordon's help, he excellently trained these regiments in latest European tactics. They built sham cities and stormed them. He wrote orders to them, and they were strictly carried out. Thus, without understanding it, Peter was preparing himself by play, in a little make-believe world of his own making, for the great tasks that awaited him in future.

Then, one night in 1689, it became known that Sophia was gathering troops in order to get rid of her half brother. Roused out of bed, Peter had to flee for his life. It was after that night that a nervous twitch appeared in his face. But the Czarevna's plot failed. The majority of Muscovite troops remained faithful to Peter, the lawful Czar. Outnumbered, Sophia's supporters capitulated with-

out a fight. Thus, the seventeen-year-old Czar became Muscovia's full-fledged ruler. His half sister retired to a nunnery and the ring-leaders of the frustrated revolt lost their heads.

From that moment on, Peter's make-believe world of Preobrazhenskoye naturally transformed itself into the Government of the Czardom. The friends of his childhood, from his educator Prince Golitsin and the shrewd, arrogant peasant lad Menshikov to General Gordon, became his leading statesman and commanders. His two regiments became the kernel of his Imperial Guards. In the wars Peter waged, they invariably fought with exemplary courage and skill.

All his life long, Peter remained aware of the insufficiency of his haphazard education and was thirsty for new knowledge. A motto engraved on one of his private seals read: "I am learning and looking for teachers." Moreover, he retained from his childhood the habit of learning everything through experience. At a certain point, he came to understand that Russia would need a powerful navy. But the Russians knew nothing about shipbuilding. Accordingly, in 1697, abandoning important affairs of state, he went to Holland under the assumed identity of "Peter Mikhailov" and worked for several months as a simple workman at the shipyards of Amsterdam. He also added to it a study of the theory of shipbuilding in England, and returned to Moscow as a real expert in the field. Later, there was a time in Peter's life when he studied even dentistry. It was unfortunate for some of his friends. Eager to demonstrate his new skill, he pushed them into chairs and extracted not only their ailing, but also their sound teeth. Then, roaring with hearty laughter, he nursed their swollen gums and consoled them with huge potions of wine.

Peter's reforms touched on all sides of Russian life. In 1698, he ordered the nobles and the citizens to shave their beards, discard

Byzantine clothes and don silk stockings, smart Western jackets and wigs. Noblewomen had to get into European, low-cut gowns and plumed, broad-brimmed hats. Clergy and peasants alone were allowed to go on wearing beards and old clothes. Doubtless, it was a superficial change. But Peter believed, and quite correctly, that, after the Russians got used to their new attire, they would start following European fashions which, in turn, would awaken their interest in things European in general.

By degree, too, Peter ordered that prominent families hold "social assemblies" for the nobles and better-off citizens with their women-folks. Attendance was made compulsory. At such gatherings, the guests conversed and the younger people danced European dances. (Up to then, there was practically no public dancing in Muscovia except among peasants.) Thus, for the first time, women were forcibly turned out of the seclusion of their *terems*, and, by the Czar's command, social life of European type came into being in Russia.

Peter was especially eager to see the Russians educated along European lines. In large cities, he opened a number of grammar schools as well as schools for mathematics, engineering, foreign languages, etc. These schools could be attended by freemen of all classes alike. Later, he organized the Academy of Sciences and summoned German professors to it, hoping that, with time, they would train Russian scientists. Up to those days, most Muscovite nobles, let alone men of lower origin, were illiterate. To make his war on ignorance yield quick results, the Czar decreed that henceforth no nobleman could get married or receive an officer's rank unless he passed a test in literacy and some other subjects. Besides, the Czar yearly sent scores of promising young men to foreign universities in order to train them as expert scientists, builders, engineers.

Before Peter, it was chiefly men of princely, boyar and other

prominent noble families who were military commanders, ambassadors, governors of provinces and who held other important Government jobs. Peter rejected that old, aristocratic principle of birth and built the whole system of Government service on that of effort and achievement. Henceforth, any young Russian, no matter whether he was a prince or a penniless commoner, entered the army as a private, or the civil service as a simple clerk. He was made officer only after passing the educational test, and rose still higher solely through distinguished service. Commoners thus could (and did) become generals, while an aristocrat, if he were inefficient, remained in low ranks. Moreover, after attaining a certain military or civil rank, a commoner became a hereditary nobleman. True to these new principles, Peter abolished the aristocratic Council of Boyars. Instead, when he needed advice in the matters of State, he convened his Cabinet, composed of heads of various Government departments. The very word boyar henceforth fell out of use. The ancient Russian title of prince remained. Besides, on men who had especially distinguished themselves in service, Peter bestowed the European titles of baron and count, which had not existed in Muscovia before.

Furthermore, Peter rebuilt the entire Muscovite army. Formerly, the bulk of it was made up of mounted, mediæval-type militia manned by noblemen. It gathered only when the country was at war and thus was not a regular force. Foot regiments of fusiliers, recruited among men of lower origin (and often trained by foreigners) alone were regular. But they were few. Meanwhile, with all of Europe acquiring well-trained, professional armies, Russia also needed one. Hence, Peter abolished both the noble militia and the fusilier units and created instead one mass of regular regiments, in which nobles and commoners served together.

Nor was that all. Peter founded *The Moscow News*, first Rus-

sian newspaper, and himself issued its first copies. Among other things, he was a good printer and engraver. Books on all subjects, translated from foreign tongues, began to appear on his order in Russia. Finally, to stimulate the development of industries, to which the Czar gave much thought, he organized modern mines, foundries, weaving and other factories at the Government expense and sold them to merchants and nobles. Incidentally, it was he who first began to exploit, though, of course, on a small scale, the mineral wealth of the Urals.

At first, Peter's reforms stirred up a terrific confusion. Some of them, like the shaving of beards and the donning of European clothes, caused a storm of indignation and protests. Old-fashioned nobles saw in the "clownish foreign dress" an insufferable insult to religion and to their dignity. Peter, literally, dragged scores of them by their beards in order to have them cut. Nor was the opposition always comic in nature. Before reorganizing the army, Peter had to suppress a wide revolt of the fusiliers who favored the "old ways." Two thousand of them were executed. Moreover, the old and the new, the Muscovite and the European mixed in a hopeless mess in the Russians' minds and manners. In his youth, Peter himself increased that mess by acting rashly, by wanting to change overnight things which time alone could change and by irritating some of his subjects without necessity.

But then the Czar's reforms began rapidly to strike roots. Forced to educate and "Europeanize" themselves, the Russians made remarkably swift progress. Besides oppositionists, Peter found a rapidly growing number of supporters, especially among younger noblemen, whom he had fired with his enthusiasm. And so, new order started to emerge out of chaos. Yet, Peter knew all along that the ultimate success or failure of his task hinged on one thing—on the issue of his war against Sweden.

For Russia, switched by the Czar on European rails, could go on rolling on them solely if she acquired a good route for trade and other contacts with the Western world. The only such possible route lay via the Baltic shore controlled by Sweden. Hence, in 1700, Peter concluded an alliance with Augustus, King of Poland and Saxony, and moved his troops against the Swedes. He started out by besieging Narva, a Swedish fortress in the Baltic region.

Charles XII was then King of Sweden. No one knew yet that that young man, strange and unruly, was a born military genius. But Peter soon found it out. Suddenly appearing before Russian positions near Narva, Charles attacked them in a terrific snow blizzard. Peter's new, hastily trained, regular army was taken by surprise and thrown into panic. Men fled and, in a stampede on a bridge, killed and smothered one another. The Czar's Preobrazhensky and Semyonovsky regiments alone fought very stoutly and retreated in order. But the Russian defeat was smashing nevertheless. All of Peter's artillery and supplies fell into Charles's hands.

It was a terrible moment for Peter. Reactionary Muscovites made fun of him and blamed the disaster on his reforms. The young Czar's prestige fell very low. But Charles made a fatal mistake. If he had pursued the remnants of the Russian army, he probably would have taken Moscow. Instead, he turned against King Augustus, Peter's ally, and became engaged in endless fighting in Poland and Saxony. It was only in 1707 that he defeated Augustus and turned once more against Russia. But it was too late.

The disaster at Narva did not discourage Peter. Nothing ever did. He helped Augustus with money, grain and a small expeditionary force so as to keep Charles busy in Poland as long as possible. Meanwhile, without wasting a day, he began to build up a new army and to train it in the light of the experience so dearly gained. Three hundred new cannon were cast. Copper, of which the can-

non were made, was scarce in Russia. Church bells were used to provide it. Two years later, the new army was in existence. With Charles still in Poland, Peter returned to the Baltic theatre, defeated minor Swedish forces there, quickly erected a few fortresses and, in 1703, began to build St. Petersburg. Moreover, he now put to use the knowledge he gained in Holland and England. On Lake Ladoga, connected by Neva River with the sea, shipyards were set up, and they began to turn out naval ships at a breakneck speed.

I have told before what immense effort and expenditure were involved in the building of Petersburg on the Neva swamps. The helping of Augustus, the creation of a new army and the construction of naval ships cost even more. Russia was bled white by taxes and by the dispatch of hundreds of thousands of men to the Baltic. But it was a necessity that Russia retain the Baltic shore. And Peter knew that Charles would not give it up without the fight of his life. But most Russians did not understand it. They only knew that their life became very hard. Wide revolts broke out among the peasants and the Cossacks of the Don. Peter quelled them with difficulty. The whole State was shaking. It was at that moment that Charles tackled Russia again.

From Poland, the Swedes marched to south Russia. Charles hoped that the Dnieper, or Ukrainian, Cossacks would also revolt against Peter and act as Sweden's allies. But a great majority of them remained loyal to Russia. Meanwhile, Peter with his main army also sped south. In 1709, the two enemies met near Poltava, a Russian fortress in the Ukraine.

Peter's entire lifework was at stake. He decided to direct the battle himself. Before its beginning, he issued an order in which he admonished his men: "Do not think of Peter's safety; think of Russia." Charles threw his regiments into attack with his habitual daring. It was a severe and very bloody battle. Peter's own hat was

shot through by a Swedish bullet. But now the tables were turned on Charles. Peter's army stood like a wall of steel. By noon the Swedes were utterly defeated. The bulk of their forces surrendered. Charles himself, wounded, was carried away in a stretcher to Turkey. That night, Peter invited the captured Swedish officers to a feast. He treated them with greatest kindness. He toasted them: "I drink to you, my teachers!"

Sweden's military might was broken for good. The hostilities continued on and off for many more years, but the Swedes suffered only fresh defeats. The heaviest of them was that inflicted by the newborn Russian navy on a powerful Swedish fleet in 1714. Finally, Sweden gave up. In 1721, it formally surrendered to Russia the whole Baltic area, including the present-day Esthonia and Latvia, and the southern part of Finland with the city of Viborg (now Viipuri).

Peter also fought Turkey and Persia. The Turkish attack on Russia in 1711 turned out unfortunately for the Czar. His forces suffered a serious reverse on the Prut River, and he himself barely escaped capture. That was a bitter disappointment to Peter who realized that, some day, the Black Sea would be as important to his country as the Baltic. But the war with Persia resulted in the occupation by the Russians of the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea, including Baku in Transcaucasia.

Petersburg, "built on Russian bones," rose out of the bleak northern swamp more beautiful with every day. Peter disliked Moscow. It reminded him of the hated "old spirit" and of the massacre in the Kremlin of his maternal uncles by Sophia's supporters. Petersburg, the child of his creation and the symbol of his reforms, he adored. In its broad avenues and canals, in the Dutch- and German-style stone palaces of the nobles, and in streets teeming with foreign

sailors, he saw Europe and modern progress transplanted with his own hands on Russian soil.

In 1714, he moved his own residence and the offices of the Government to the new capital. In 1721, upon the conclusion of peace with Sweden, he assumed, in addition to the old title of the Czar, that of the "Emperor of all the Russias." The event was marked by great celebrations. The snow in the semi-Arctic night of Petersburg was fantastically lighted by a profusion of fireworks. Noisy crowds of masked merry-makers, with huge figures from Greek mythology riding in gilded chariots, filled the streets.

Peter knew that his efforts had succeeded. He now was surrounded with legions of enthusiastic supporters. His name was famed all over Europe. Peace reigned in his empire. Yet, he felt that much, very much, was still to be done. Trade with foreign lands was to be further intensified. Russia, drained by wars, had to be developed economically. He worked with his usual intensity.

In the late fall of 1724, he saw some soldiers drowning in heavy seas off the shore of Petersburg. Without a moment's hesitation, he rushed to save them, got drenched and developed a cold from which he never recovered. He died in January, 1725.

Peter's reforms yielded rich fruit. Henceforth, the Russian State rapidly developed along European lines.

The age of Peter's immediate successors, most of whom were women, was an age of powdered wigs, of gallantry and dazzling splendor, of court intrigues and of smashing military victories. Russia's might was at its peak. Her word carried an immense weight in European affairs. Such was the time of Empress Elizabeth, Peter's daughter, who ruled from 1741 to 1761, and especially the reign of Catherine the Great, which lasted from 1762 to 1796.

The Russian court at first imitated the style of the court of the

kings of France and then surpassed it in luxury. European-style palaces, one larger and more sumptuous than the other, were erected in and around Petersburg and filled with treasures of European art without regard to the expense involved. Russian noblemen, who had been so reluctant in Peter's day to shave their Muscovite beards, now became thoroughly "Frenchified." Some of them even spoke French better than their native tongue. A fabulous extravagance reigned. Catherine's leading magnates spent fortunes on a single fête given in her honor. They trained theatrical companies in order to appear at such a fête and chartered ships to bring roses from France to decorate their homes on the occasion (in Petersburg's cold climate roses did not grow). Reckless gambling, which was also one of the European practices imported into Russia, flourished. That sort of thing went on while the mass of the people often hungered.

Yet, among these effeminate-looking, powdered and bejeweled gentlemen there were remarkably talented statesmen and great generals. Prince Potemkin, one of Catherine's favorites, excellently organized and colonized the freshly conquered shores of the Black Sea. Count Suvorov, a little, crankish old man, was a first-rate military genius who worked out a new and original tactical system. Adored by his soldiers, he won smashing victories against Turkish, French and other armies which are studied by tacticians to this day. "Suvorov's Order" is at present the highest military decoration in the Soviet Army.

In the nineteenth century the picture changed. The czars-emperors and the grand dukes (now that title was borne by the members of the Imperial family) passed to normal and modest life, similar to that of all European monarchs. Towards the end of the century, they even stressed their sober, Victorian mode of life. For instance, Emperor Alexander III (who died in 1894) was famed for wearing

trousers which were mended time and again. In magnificent Catherinean palaces, old splendor was revived only at official court balls and on other solemn occasions.

Europeanism in Russian life ceased to be superficial, showy and excessive. Penetrating deep into the minds and manners of the people of the upper classes, it blended harmoniously with old Russian traditions and ways of life and produced a real and brilliant national Russian culture.

Russian literature was born, and almost overnight it blossomed forth into a golden age which lasted all through the century and outshone in genius, subtlety and power of expression the nineteenth century literatures of other European countries. Since the 1820's, Alexander Pushkin, an impoverished aristocrat, became the king of Russian poets. His divine verse means to Russians what Shakespeare's means to the English and Goethe's to the Germans. He was surrounded by a group of poets almost as remarkable as he. Towards the middle of the century, there appeared the greatest Russian novelists—Gogol, Turgenev, Count Tolstoy, Dostoevsky. Their works, translated into all civilized languages, are now known to the entire world. Besides literature, Russia produced incomparable ballet, theatre and music. The symphonies composed by Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Moussorgsky and other Russian composers are now played almost daily in our country, and each one of us hums or whistles tunes from them. Finally, Russian universities, which became great centers of learning, trained a number of remarkable chemists, biologists and other scientists whose names stand in the very front row of world science. The Russian people proved to be talented indeed. In but one century, Russia made a contribution to the world's treasury of arts and of creative thought that gives it a place of honor among the leading nations of the world.

All of that brilliant blooming of Russian culture in the nineteenth

century was a direct outcome of the reforms by which Peter the Great had forced his fellow countrymen to school themselves in "Western ways."

Yet, with it, the Russia of the nineteenth century suffered also from great and heavy internal ills.

Up to the 1860's, the new, Western-type Russian culture benefited only the small upper classes of Russia's population—the nobility, the merchants, the professional men and the better-off city folks. As for the peasants, who formed a great majority of the people, it had barely touched them at all. The same mediæval Muscovite ignorance as in the days before Peter the Great continued to prevail among them. Worse still, they lived in great poverty. And they were reduced to the position of slaves, or almost slaves, of the noblemen.

Before and during the reign of Ivan the Terrible, an overwhelming majority of Russian peasants were still freemen. An important principle functioned in Muscovia's life then. Besides the State (or the Czar), *only he who served that State* could own land or hold it in temporary tenure. Unconditional private ownership of land, such as existed in Western Europe, did not exist in Russia. That principle determined Muscovia's whole social system.

The noblemen owned (or held) the estates, but in exchange they had to fight defending the State, or serve it as civil officials. Their service was lifelong, and they received no pay for it but the income from these estates. The peasant tilled the land and, besides making his own living, paid a tax (in products or in labor) to the State. If he lived on the nobleman's estate, he worked also for the nobleman. While work in the field was on, the peasant could not leave the estate on which he lived. But when the crops were in, he was at liberty to move to any other estate.

When Muscovia was at war, the taxes levied on peasants were quite heavy. Outfitting the nobleman and his retainers for war also cost a great deal. Thus, at times, peasants went hungry. But they knew that noblemen's service was quite as hard. In the endless wars which Muscovia waged, young princes, boyars, and small gentry fell by the thousand. The civil jobs to which the czars sent them were often dangerous and difficult. Thus, the peasant felt that there was a great fundamental justice in, one may say, that peculiar Socialist system. There were no "parasites" in Muscovia. *All* worked or served.

But that system eventually came to an end. In the troubled years after Ivan's death, peasants fled in mass from regions ravaged by civil wars. Huge estates lay fallow, and the income of the Muscovite treasury dwindled. That forced the czars to "attach" the peasants to the land, or to forbid their moving from one estate to another. It did not make slaves out of peasants—yet. They still retained civil rights. But it did deal a blow to their freedom. They became "serfs," or halfway freemen.

After Peter's death, the peasant's lot deteriorated still further.

Peter left no son. His two grandsons were minors. Subsequently, as Peter II and Peter III, each reigned for a short while. There remained only the Great Peter's wife, daughters and nieces in the Romanov family. No comprehensive law of succession was in existence. Hence, for some years the throne changed hands quite often. The time of powdered wigs and mad extravagance was also the time of sordid court plots. Groups of noblemen helped now this, now that female member of the Romanov family to overthrow the reigning emperor or empress and to ascend the throne. Noblemen now served chiefly in the newly created regiments of Imperial Guards which were stationed around Petersburg. And it is these

"noblemen's regiments" which thus became for a time the instrument of the making and unmaking of the czars.

Profiting by their power, the noblemen demanded and obtained great privileges from the rulers they had put on the throne. And these privileges proved to be detrimental to the peasants.

In 1762, by order of Emperor Peter III, noblemen were freed of the lifelong service. Instead, they were allowed to serve or not to serve at all, as they pleased, though the Emperor expressed the hope that they would go on serving (as, in fact, they did). Already before this, noblemen's estates, both those owned outright and held in tenure, were transformed into their full private property.

Moreover, peasants living on the noblemen's estates were deprived of all civil rights. The nobleman was henceforth allowed to make them work for him as much as he liked and to punish them by beating, banishment to Siberia or anything else short of death. Formerly, peasants could not be bought or sold. They could pass from one nobleman to another only when the land to which they were attached changed hands. But now the selling of peasants separately from the land was made legal. Human beings were shamelessly sold at auction or lost at a gambling table. Families were often broken up, the husband being sold separately from the wife or the children. Thus, a majority of Russia's population was transformed into the noblemen's virtual slaves. And the noblemen, relieved of their former heavy duties, were allowed to become carefree parasites living off the work of their slaves. True, the lot of peasants living on Government lands was much better. It remained the same as it had been before. Besides, the Cossacks continued to be freemen. But all these formed only a minority. On top of all else, it was the enslaved peasants who henceforth had to do a large part of the defending of the State. For, as time went on, European armies expanded. Noblemen, even while they still were under the obliga-

tion to serve, did not suffice to give Russia an adequate army. The Government long since took increasing numbers of peasant recruits, and it was they who now made up the bulk of the rank-and-file.

The peasants did not take it all calmly. Ever since their "attachment" to the land in the 1600's, riots, sometimes serious ones, occurred. But it was the terrific injustices done to peasants in the eighteenth century that caused the greatest trouble. In 1773, during the reign of Catherine the Great, a great peasant revolt broke out in the eastern part of the country. It was led by a Cossack named Yemelyan Pugachyov. It was not directed against the autocracy. At that time the Emperor (or Empress) still remained something like a demigod in the eyes of the people. To attract followers, Pugachyov even claimed that he himself was Emperor Peter III who had escaped assassination. (In reality, Peter III had been dethroned and murdered.) For their misfortunes, peasants blamed solely the nobles. Immense peasant bands, armed with pitchforks, axes, guns and what not, massacred noble families, burned and pillaged their manors and pronounced serfdom "abolished by order of Czar Peter III." The entire huge country along the Volga from Astrakhan to Kazan was in flames. It took Catherine's armies two years of bloodshed to quell the rising. Pugachyov himself and other ringleaders were executed.

After that, serfdom lasted for nearly ninety years more. All of the czars during that period regarded it as a great evil. And yet, for various reasons, they feared to abolish it.

Catherine, the friend of Voltaire, Diderot and of other French philosophers, was a very enlightened woman. But she was entirely dependent on the nobility. She was brought to the throne by the Imperial Guards, who had done away with Peter III, her stupid, rude and unpopular husband. As a German princess by birth, she had no real right to rule over Russia, keeping the crown away from

Paul (subsequently, Paul I), her son by Peter III, who was the legitimate heir to the throne. She did so—thanks solely to the support of the Guards. Hence, she obviously dared not go against the nobility's wishes in the peasant problem.

Paul I, when at last he acceded to the throne in 1796, was already a half-madman. He was full of good intentions with regard to peasants, but, in the short five years of his reign, he managed only to make a mess of all affairs of State. His continued reign would have been a danger to Russia. One night in 1801, out of purely patriotic considerations, a group of the Guard officers entered his palace to force him to abdicate the throne. He resisted and was killed. Alexander I, his elder son, was proclaimed Emperor.

From that night on, the succession in the Romanov family became legal and normal. The nobility, fully controlled by Alexander I and by the czars who came after, never attempted again to organize "court coups." Alexander, who reigned until 1825, was one of the most enlightened, intelligent and liberal monarchs of his time. He had the reputation of being the most fascinating man in Europe. Incidentally, he was the first man in the world who proposed the idea of a league of nations which would outlaw wars and settle international disputes by peaceful means. (Europe was not yet ready for that idea, and it bore no fruit.) Alexander not only dreamed of abolishing serfdom, but also proceeded with working out projects to that effect. But it was then that Napoleon, Emperor of the French, embarked on his great conquests in Europe. Resisting him, Alexander became involved in great and difficult wars. In 1812 Napoleon invaded Russia and even took Moscow. True, shortly after it, he was thrown out of Russia, and it was the beginning of his undoing. In 1814 Alexander rode as a victor into Paris. While these wars and the long recuperation period after them were in progress, it was impossible even to think of abolishing serf-

dom. For that reform would unavoidably require very great economic readjustments which could be made only in calm times. From free slave labor, Russia, with the liberation of serfs, would pass to an economy based on money wages. No one knew how it would work out. It was feared that serious financial upheavals would result.

After Russia's wounds had healed, Alexander was a changed man. Crushed by various personal tragedies, he had no spiritual strength left for carrying out any reforms. His reign was glorious. After the victory over Napoleon, he was the most admired and praised monarch in Europe, and his word carried an immense weight in the affairs of the world. But it gave him no joy. He sank into religious mysticism and complained that his crown became an unbearable burden to him. What tortured him most was the memory of the night in 1801 when Paul, his father, was murdered. For the Guard officers had informed him, Alexander, of their plot in advance. He shared their conviction that Russia's interests demanded the half-insane Emperor's removal. They had not told him that, besides dethroning, they also would kill his father. Now, in retrospect, he appeared to himself as almost his father's assassin, and there was no end to his torment. It remains unclear to this day whether Alexander actually died in 1825, on a trip to south Russia, when he is supposed to have died. Some historians give credence to the legend that the disguised body of a dead soldier was sent in "the Czar's" coffin to Petersburg. As for Alexander, he is supposed to have walked away to Siberia, dressed as a simple peasant pilgrim, Fyodor Kuzmich, and to have lived there for many more years in poverty and seclusion, expiating his sins. Some features of the peculiar personality of Fyodor Kuzmich (for an old man bearing that name did live in Siberia) seem to indicate that he actually may have been Alexander.

Finally, Alexander's brother and successor, Nicholas I, who reigned up to 1855, failed to abolish serfdom out of fear of revolution. Despite serfdom, Russian masses still regarded the Czar with an almost religious adoration. Besides, they had never heard of any other system of government but autocracy. Noblemen could like or dislike this or that emperor, but the bulk of them also remained unswervingly faithful to the autocratic system. Yet, ever since the great French Revolution of 1789, advanced republican and democratic ideas, born in France and in the United States, had been penetrating into the Russian upper class. Already during Alexander's reign there appeared idealistically inclined noblemen who saw in autocracy nothing but tyranny and dreamed of the establishment of representative government in Russia. Though few in the beginning, such noble free thinkers, most of whom were officers of Guard regiments, gradually grew in number. They even formed a secret society which dreamed of far-reaching, though rather nebulous, reforms. And when Alexander died (or disappeared), that society, led by Colonel Prince Trubetskoy and some others, made an attempt not to allow Nicholas to ascend the throne and to start a revolution.

The troops which followed the young revolutionists were so few that the whole rising was suppressed without any difficulty and with hardly any bloodshed. Five of the ringleaders were executed; others were banished to Siberia. But that first purely revolutionary attempt in Russian history made a deep impression on the new emperor. Tall, straightforward and chivalrous, Nicholas, at the same time, was a great disciplinarian and believer in autocracy. That there could be a Western type of revolutionary movement in Russia, was a sad revelation to him. He wanted to liberate the serfs. But he was afraid that, misunderstood by them, liberation would lead to a huge peasant revolt like Pugachyov's; that new

revolutionary outbreaks led by the upper-class free thinkers would be added to it; and that thus Russia would be plunged into senseless anarchy. Hence, he confined himself to prohibiting the sale of peasants without land and the breaking up of peasant families. On the other hand, he decided to eradicate Western liberal and revolutionary ideas from Russia's upper class. Accordingly, strict censorship was imposed on the press, on publishing and on the teaching of social sciences in universities. In that sense, his reign was reactionary.

And yet it was during Nicholas's reign that events took place which, at long last, brought about the liberation of the serfs.

After Pugachyov's great uprising of 1773, no large-scale peasant revolts took place in Russia. With relatively few exceptions, relations between noblemen and their serfs were not bad. For, since the peasant worked for the nobleman, it was in the latter's interests to treat him humanely. Yet, depressed by their enslavement and deprived of all initiative, peasants worked lazily. Even in agricultural goods, Russia produced far less than she could. Worse still, serfdom made her industrial development virtually impossible. True, the Government put peasants living on State lands to work in a few State-owned mines and factories. Some of the wealthy nobles imitated the State. But merchants and better-off citizens, who would be the men to open new industrial plants, could not do so because there was no labor. How could there be, if the majority of Russians were slaves owned by noblemen? Poor in industries, Russia was also very poor in capital. She had but a few banks. Her middle class was insignificant, her combined city population small.

And so, pulled down by the dead weight of serfdom, Russia, in the first fifty years of the nineteenth century, once more fell behind the countries of Western Europe in her material progress. Mean-

while, it was exactly in those fifty years that the Western countries, entering upon the industrial age, took an especially great forward stride. A century earlier, Great Peter, by his heroic effort, had pulled Russia up to, or almost up to, the technical level of the West. Now, the great scourge of serfdom thwarted his achievement. The technical and industrial disparity between Russia and the Western world was once more as bad as it had been in the pre-Peter days.

These facts were brought to the surface by the so-called Crimean War, which broke out in 1853. It began by a conflict between Russia and Turkey over various frontier and other problems. But soon Turkey was joined by England and France, who feared the growth of Russia's influence in the Balkans. Thus, Nicholas found himself at war with a powerful coalition.

Covered by mighty British and French fleets, the three allies landed a strong expeditionary force in the Crimea and besieged Sevastopol, the Russian naval base. The Russian army holding it fought with immense heroism, but in vain. The Russian navy had only sailing ships, while the allies commanded many steamships. It gave them such an advantage that the Russians could not meet them in a naval battle. The British and French artillery, rifles and other equipment were superior to the Russian. Worse still, Russia had as yet but one railroad, about 400 miles long, from Moscow to Petersburg. (Britain at the time had over 8,000 miles of rail, and the United States about 25,000 miles.) There were but poor dirt roads on the 700-mile distance between Moscow and Sevastopol. Endless streams of springless carts, sinking in the spring and fall mud, and drawn by emaciated peasant horses, hauled supplies over these roads to the besieged city. Numberless corpses of fallen horses lay on the sides of these roads. Yet, despite the great distance which separated Franco-British forces from their home countries, they

were supplied and reënforced by sea more rapidly than the Russians could supply and reënforce their troops overland. Hence, Sevastopol's Russian defenders were outnumbered and outsupplied. They held out for nearly a year. But then a day came when Sevastopol was stormed and taken by the allies. Russia lost the war.

The Russians were deeply hurt by the defeat. A century earlier, Catherine's armies knew no equals in Europe. In 1812 Russia held her own against the "invincible" Napoleon and, eventually, spelled his doom. And now she lost out to a mere expeditionary force sent from far away. All open-minded Russians grasped the meaning of it. Russia was defeated by her own economic backwardness due to serfdom.

Despite his shortcomings, Nicholas was a sincere patriot. Even before the fall of Sevastopol, he became aware of the great harm which his failure to liberate the serfs had done. He died, not so much of a cold he had contracted, as of a broken heart.

His elder son, tall, muscular, blue-eyed Alexander II, succeeded to the throne. Educated by Zhukovsky, a noted Russian poet and humanitarian, the new Czar was kindly by nature and held liberal views. His mind was made up: his first task would be the liberation of serfs. Preparations for the reform began from the very first days of his reign.

At that time the Russian nobility was no longer the same as it had been at the beginning of the century. Doubtless, a great many nobles still remained opposed to the reform out of selfish considerations. But, despite the rigors of Nicholas's censorship, the great novelist Turgenev, the poet Nekrasov and a great many other writers, though most of them serf-owners themselves, had long since educated the Russian public in liberal views and demonstrated to it the barbarous unfairness of serfdom. The outcome of the Crimean War was also a mighty eye-opener. Thousands of

liberal nobles, let alone middle-class men, now gave enthusiastic support to Alexander's initiative.

Finally, all preparations were completed. The Great Reform was solemnly decreed in 1861, two years before the liberation of Negro slaves in the United States.

By the Czar's will, serfdom was abolished. All peasants were made free men. The nobles retained no rights whatsoever over their former serfs. Now peasants could be punished solely by the police and courts of justice, like other Russian subjects. No payment was levied on peasants for their liberation.

Peasants also received land. Well over one half of the noblemen's lands were distributed among them. Those of the peasants who lived on State lands received land from the Government. Each grown-up male peasant received from 2.7 to 30 acres, depending on local conditions in different areas. Henceforth, 361,000,000 acres of land good for cultivation were owned in European Russia by peasants; 210,000,000 acres of such land remaining in the hands of the nobles; 20,000,000 acres were retained by the State (which, besides, retained a large amount of land not suited for cultivation). In payment for lands taken away from them, the nobles received Government bonds. The peasants had to redeem these bonds by yearly payments over a period of forty-nine years.

Alexander and his ministers feared lest, profiting by the peasants' poverty, noblemen and merchants might gradually buy their allotments and leave them without land. Hence, instead of making these allotments a private property of each peasant, the Government gave them to peasant village communes called *mir*s. Once in every few years the mir had to redistribute the land among peasant families as some of these families increased while others diminished. A peasant who wished to give up agriculture and move to the city could surrender his lot only to the mir, but not sell it to outsiders.

But, of course, peasants had the right to buy more land on the free market which became their private property.

With the Great Reform began a new epoch of Russia's life.

In the shape of bonds issued by the Government to noblemen there appeared in the country a large capital that called for investment. That capital set the wheels of economic progress turning with a speed which Russia had never witnessed before. Railroad building began. By 1914, Russia had 49,000 miles of rail, a network second only to that of the United States. Russia's industries developed with the same speed. In 1850, the huge Empire had practically no cotton industry at all. By 1914, it had about 9,000,000 spindles and 250,000 looms, which made her the fourth largest producer of cotton goods in the world. From 1,650,000 tons in 1900, Russia's metal production rose in 1914 to over 4,100,000 tons. It was much the same with other industries. In 1861, Russia started from practically nothing. The seventy or eighty years wasted before that could not have been made up in the fifty-three years from 1861 to 1914. By 1914, Russia's industries still remained far behind those of England and Germany, let alone those of the United States. But the tempo of Russia's industrial development from the end of the nineteenth century on became quite as fast as that of our country.

Equally rapid became Russia's social progress. After 1861, peasants had the same right to enter schools and universities as other classes of population. The number of educational institutions kept multiplying swiftly. The results were remarkable. Before 1861, only a few hundred thousand children, mostly of the upper class, attended elementary public schools. In 1881, the number rose to 1,141,000. By 1914, it climbed to 8,147,000, so that a large percentage of all Russian children were receiving education. Among the 137,000 students who, in 1912, attended universities, about

half were sons of peasants, artisans, laborers. And Russian universities were rated very high in all European countries. With the abolition of serfdom, the nobility lost practically all of its privileges save that of serving in Guard regiments, which no longer meant anything. Some noblemen retained great wealth and large landed estates. But the majority, deprived of free slave labor, no longer could run their estates at a profit, and gradually sold them and went into Government service, business or liberal professions—freely mixing with other classes. Russian life was rapidly becoming genuinely democratic. Suffice it to say that during World War I quite a few topmost Russian generals, including Alexeyev, the virtual Commander-in-Chief, were sons of peasants.

Yet, despite that progress, autocracy was rapidly losing its popularity, and the country drifting towards a revolution.

Why? A great many factors were responsible for it.

The freed peasants were far from being satisfied with their position. And they formed 75 percent of Russia's population.

Many of the land allotments which they received in 1861 were barely sufficient for their sustenance, especially in view of the antiquated farming methods which they used. Most peasants lived in poverty. Worse still, as time went on, some of them got better off, but the majority, if anything, grew even poorer. For Russia's population increased very rapidly. In 1722, the country numbered but 12,500,000 inhabitants. In 1851, the figure rose to 67,000,000; by 1914, to 176,000,000. The growth of the number of peasants had the effect of reducing the land owned by them by two-thirds. For each allotment which had fed one peasant in 1861, had to feed three in 1914.

In reality matters were not quite so bad as that. From 1861 to 1914, noblemen sold more than half of the land that had been left to them. Most of it was bought by peasants with the help of Gov-

ernment credit. That increased the total amount of peasant lands by some 27 percent. Moreover, though with delays, the Government took measures to help peasants. It taught them better farming methods, which did some good. By 1910, peasant lands yielded 50 percent more per acre than they had in 1870. Also, from 1903 on, the Government yearly financed the migration of some 500,000 peasants to Siberia, where it gave them fertile virgin lands and helped them to settle. More important still, since the beginning of our century, hundreds of thousands of peasants per year gave up farming and became workers in the rapidly expanding Russian industries. (The percentage of peasants who, receiving higher education, went into liberal professions as yet remained small.)

Yet, even all of these factors combined did not fully offset the effect of the increase of peasant population. For 2,500,000 children were yearly born in peasant families. While Russian cities rapidly grew in wealth, much of European Russia's countryside was congested and lived in misery.

Land-hungry as they were, peasants looked with growing envy at the estates which still remained in noblemen's hands. "The Czar," they argued, "gave us part of these estates in 1861; let him give us now the rest." But the Government felt that it had no right to dispossess the nobles once more, now that they were not serf owners, but merely land proprietors. Besides, noblemen owned now only some 17 percent of lands good for cultivation in European Russia. Even if all of their estates were divided among peasants, that would give the latter but a fraction of an acre per man and help little. But the majority of peasants did not realize it. There were occasions when they revolted, chased away or put to death a neighboring landowner and proceeded to divide his estate. The police or the troops checked them and heavy punishments were inflicted on them. With time, it all made them feel that the Czar did not want

to help them. The blind adoration which peasants bore him even in the worst times of the serfdom began to die. Since, roughly, the 1900's, it was giving place to sullen indifference. As for the Czar's Government, it was disliked. Thus, autocracy no longer stood by the will of an immense majority of the Russian people.

But that was not all.

While thirsting for land, peasants were not interested in politics. Among liberal nobles, the newborn class of industrialists, professional people and intellectuals, to the contrary, there was clamor for political reforms. Since 1861, increasing numbers of them believed that, instead of being ruled by a czar, Russia must become a constitutional monarchy, in which the czar would only reign, while laws would be made and the Government controlled by an elected Parliament. Through the Parliament, they themselves wanted to take part in the running of the country. The press, which was much freer under Alexander II than it had been under his predecessor, expressed these wishes and criticized more and more sharply the autocratic form of Government.

Alexander II did not remain deaf to the clamor of public opinion. He fully realized that the people would have to be admitted to participation in the Government. Hence, shortly after 1861, he carried out other important reforms. The opening of a large number of new educational institutions was one of them. He introduced universal military service for the young men of all social classes and abolished corporal punishments in the army. He set up excellent new courts of justice with trial by jury, jurors being elected also from men of all classes. (Jury trial which existed under Ivan the Terrible had come to an end when the peasants were enslaved.) More important still, in 1864, Alexander created the *zemstvo*, or local self-government, in which land-owning nobles, merchants and peasants participated alike. That *zemstvo* was en-

trusted with the opening and running of schools, hospitals, roads, agricultural stations, etc., in every district and province. Alexander hoped that the Russian people, who hitherto had lacked all experience in public affairs, would now gradually get it. That would prepare Russia for representative Government which, the Czar believed, sooner or later would come. On the very eve of his death in 1881, he went even further. A bill was drafted by which elected men would be introduced into the Council of the Empire (up to then, that Council, which advised the Emperor on all matters of State, was composed solely of high officials appointed by him). But tragic developments prevented that bill from becoming a law.

A majority of liberal-minded Russians warmly sympathized with Alexander's reforms. But, among intellectuals and, especially, hot-headed university students, there were also other men, who believed that the poverty of Russian peasants could be remedied solely by the expropriation of all wealth from the better-off classes and by the establishment of socialism, which was then preached by some Western European thinkers. That, they held, could be achieved solely through a revolution which would completely wipe off the existing Government and social order. Some of these revolutionists attempted to carry on propaganda among peasants and workers. But these attempts failed. The mass of the people were still so devoted to the czars that they often dragged the propagandists to the police. But that did not discourage the revolutionists. Some of them held that, if the masses could not be persuaded to rise, the revolution still could be brought about by acts of terror, that is, by the assassination of Government ministers and of the Czar himself. After the Government was overthrown and the power would fall into the revolutionists' hands, the people, they believed, would come to understand that it was for their good.

A secret revolutionary group, which called itself "Party of the

Will of the People," but which numbered only some three dozen men, made a series of remarkably daring attempts on Alexander's life. He was repeatedly shot at in the street. A mine was dug under the railroad tracks to blow up his train. A section of the Winter Palace was blown up a few minutes before he entered it. And so on.

Up to then, Russian czars, including the reactionary Nicholas I, walked in the streets of Petersburg unprotected. They answered the greetings of the public and stopped to talk to an acquaintance, a peasant or a vendor. It never occurred to anyone that the Czar could be attacked. Now, when the liberal and kind Alexander, "Liberator Czar," became an object of a regular man hunt, the police proved to be utterly unprepared for apprehending the elusive and daring terrorists. The Government was thrown into something like panic. It seemed that not a mere handful of men (as would be ascertained later), but a mighty and widespread organization was after the Czar.

It was by miracle that Alexander escaped the first attempts. But on March 13, 1881, a bomb was whirled under his carriage when, surrounded by a Cossack escort, he was returning from a parade to the Winter Palace. A terrific explosion followed. When the smoke lifted, the passers-by saw the Czar's carriage shattered and a few Cossacks swimming in blood, but the Czar, again, unscathed. While, however, he talked to the surviving members of his escort, the second terrorist, who stood nearby, whirled one more bomb under Alexander's feet. By the new explosion, the Czar's legs were torn off almost to the abdomen. He died within a few minutes of having been brought to the palace.

The event made a deep impression on the blond, immense Alexander III, who inherited his father's throne, and determined in advance the course of Russian history. Not only were the five organizers of Alexander II's assassination executed—that would

have been done in any country—but the new Emperor, seeing the root of the evil in liberal and radical ideas, turned resolutely to reaction and followed that course all through the thirteen years of his reign. His father's project, already signed, of initiating an element of representative Government was abandoned. The Russians were told not to expect any reforms. A rigid censorship was imposed on the press, which had enjoyed much freedom under Alexander II. Men expressing not only subversive but also merely liberal views were placed under the supervision of the police, or even banished to other cities. Jews began to be strongly discriminated against. After Alexander III's death in 1894 the same policy was followed by Nicholas II, his son.

At first these measures seemed to have achieved their effect. Terroristic acts ceased, except for one unsuccessful attempt on Alexander III's life in 1887. Tranquillity set in. But it was only on the surface. In reality, the policy of these two czars served only to irritate the liberals who had supported Alexander II. As for the revolutionary movement, it continued to develop secretly, "underground." By the end of the century two much larger revolutionary parties than had ever existed before, the Social-Democrats and the Social-Revolutionists, came into being. The first preached socialism chiefly to industrial workers; the second, to peasants. Moreover, workers and peasants now began to join the revolutionary movement, though still in small numbers.

It was by the end of the century, too, that the mass of the peasants began to turn away from the czars. And so autocracy found itself actively supported only by relatively few people, chiefly by the conservative part of nobility. The bulk of Russia was dissatisfied. Soon a shock coming from without revealed these facts.

In 1904, because of various issues in dispute, the Japanese attacked Russian warships at Port Arthur, in the Far East. Russia was

forced to fight a difficult war, and lost it. (A section of the Trans-Siberian Railroad was not yet completed, and Russian communications with the Far East were very bad. The Japanese fought near their home bases, which gave them a great advantage.) The defeat had the effect of a spark thrown into a powder magazine. Discontent suddenly transformed itself into a powerful revolutionary explosion. Liberal leaders, in speeches which they dared not pronounce before, demanded the election of a Parliament by universal vote. Revolutionists, come out of hiding, led workers' demonstrations with red flags and signs reading "Down with autocracy!" and set up a *Soviet*, or council, of workers' and peasants' deputies which claimed the power. Terrorists' bombs killed Government ministers and other high officials. Strikes paralyzed railroads and factories. Battles were fought over barricades in the streets between revolutionary crowds and the police. In the countryside, peasants, having sensed that the Government was shaking, burned the landowners' manors and seized their estates. The whole country was in chaos.

Yet the bulk of the army still remained faithful to Emperor Nicholas II. With a great deal of bloodshed, revolutionary disorders were suppressed. What helped to suppress them was that the Czar granted the country a constitution. A parliament, called *Duma*, was to be set up. Its authority would be limited, and the better-off classes would have a stronger electoral vote than the mass of the people. Yet, liberal elements regarded even such a modest form of representative Government as a great victory, and the disorders subsided.

Soon, however, new disappointments set in. Though well read and not at all stupid, Nicholas II was utterly unfitted for the difficult job of Czar. He lacked his father's immense stature, straightforwardness and masterful strength of character. Weak and obsti-

nate at the same time, he was unable to take firm decisions and often fell under the influence now of this, now of that person (including his own wife). His character was full of complexities and contradictions which, being very reserved, he hid under a calm, polite mask. And his policy was a mass of vacillations. Like Alexander III, he sincerely believed in the autocracy and granted a representative government to his country only under the stress of necessity. But the worst of the revolution was over. The new Duma was composed chiefly of liberals and radicals. It demanded wide reforms, in particular the transfer of noblemen's lands to peasants. Seeing in it new attempts at revolutionary agitation, Nicholas began to curtail the Duma's authority. That drove to indignation most liberals who otherwise would have been willing to coöperate with him. A sort of a permanent conflict set in between him and the Duma.

Then, in 1914, came World War I. Russian armies went to the front with songs and, as usual, fought with great heroism. But soon they began to lack ammunition and artillery. It became apparent that Russian war industries were sadly inadequate. In two and a half years of severe fighting, the Russians gave but little ground to the Germans. But that was achieved at a very heavy price. Human lives had to be expended instead of shells and cannon. In Petersburg, now renamed Petrograd, dissatisfaction with the conduct of the war was mounting. Moreover, rumors spread that the Czar was planning a separate peace with the Germans and that Empress Alexandra, a German princess by birth, was betraying military secrets to the Germans. Later, these rumors were proven to have been utterly false. But they were credited by many, and even loudly repeated in the Duma. Penetrating into the army, they made men freezing and dying in the trenches feel that they were being "sold out."

Overstrained railroads were late in delivering foodstuffs to Petro-

grad. A shortage began there at the end of February, 1917. That shortage caused disorders and rioting among workers waiting in bread lines. In the night there was shooting in deserted streets. Troops of reserve Guard battalions were summoned to reestablish order. But they refused to fire at the workers and, instead, sided with them. In a day or two the "minor trouble" grew into a revolution. Government ministers were arrested by the rioters one after the other. Nicholas himself was caught by the events on a train, between the front and Petrograd. Emissaries from the Duma reached him and told him that nothing short of his abdication could calm the country. Realizing that he had virtually not a single supporter left, he signed the document of abdication. Even at that fateful moment his polite reserve did not abandon him for a minute. After signing the document he talked about some trivial matters to the members of his escort.

A year and a half later, Nicholas, his wife and their children, then prisoners, were murdered at Ekaterinburg, now Sverdlovsk, in the Urals.

From the moment of his abdication Old Russia was no more. The Revolution was in full swing.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Soviets

THE first years of the Revolution were times of cruel persecutions and terror, of embittered internecine wars, foreign intervention, great famines and other calamities. They cost Russia no end of material destruction and unnumbered millions of human lives.

On Nicholas II's abdication, liberal and moderate socialist elements of the Duma formed a Provisional Government which was headed first by Prince G. Lvov and then by A. Kerensky, an enthusiastic lawyer. That Government wanted to continue the war against Germany in alliance with France, England and the United States, and to organize the election of a Constituent Assembly by universal vote. That Assembly would decide upon the form of the Government and of the economic and social system under which the New Russia would live.

But the Provisional Government lasted for only eight months. Overtired by the war, soldiers interpreted the Czar's abdication as meaning that they no longer had to fight. Most of them peasants, they began to desert the front in increasing numbers, to lynch or evict landowners and divide their estates. In some places workers threw out factory owners and "socialized" (took over) factories. Crowds, shouting that "now everything is allowed," plundered. The Provisional Government proved to be weak. It opposed the growing disorder chiefly by explaining to the people that the democratically elected Constituent Assembly alone would have the authority to carry out the land reform and other reforms. That

was not enough to restore order. But even that weak opposition gradually alienated the masses from the Government.

Meanwhile, the most extreme of the socialist parties, the so-called Communist, or Bolshevik Party, led by Vladimir Lenin, was becoming more and more popular with the masses.

Originally, the Bolsheviks formed a majority in the Russian Social-Democratic Party, founded in 1898. (The word "Bolshevik" comes from *bolshinstvo*, or majority.) Then they segregated themselves from the more moderate Social-Democrats into a separate party.

Lenin, its leader, was a man of forty-seven, stocky, bald-headed, with wide cheekbones and a shrewd smile. He had been a revolutionist since early youth and spent much of his life in Old Russia's jails and in exile abroad. He was endowed with great intellectual power, foresight and ruthless will. Like all Russian socialists, he was a follower of Karl Marx, the German-Jewish thinker of the nineteenth century who had clearly formulated the theory of socialism. But to that theory he added much that was his own and new. Though small, his party was excellently disciplined and obeyed him implicitly. It was a party of daring and resolute men.

Moderate socialists wanted very far-reaching reforms. Lenin went much farther. He wanted completely to destroy the old social and economic order and old ideas; to set up full-fledged socialism, or communism, by confiscating all capital of the well-off classes, be it money, factories or land, and by making it the property of the people (of the State); and, after achieving it in Russia, to help foreign "proletarians" (laborers) carry out similar social revolutions in their countries. Like Marx, Lenin believed that a capitalist was always a parasite. For he "unfairly exploited" the workers by paying them in wages only a part of the value of the products they produced and by keeping the other part for himself. In that,

Lenin held, there was no difference between Russian, English, German or any other capitalists. And a world revolution was needed because, he believed, socialism could triumph for good only in the entire world, and not in one single country.

To realize his program, Lenin decided to seize the power cost what it may, even if his party should remain in minority. He firmly believed that, once his party had established its dictatorship over Russia, industrial workers would understand that it was championing their cause and would give it their full support. It would become "a dictatorship of the proletariat." Gradually, the slow-thinking mass of the peasantry would also be won over.

And so, from the very first days of the Revolution, Lenin and his followers made fiery speeches and wrote endless newspaper articles encouraging the soldiers to desert, the peasants to burn the landowners' manors, the workers to seize factories without waiting for the Constituent Assembly. Laborers, Lenin preached, were not interested in dying for "French or British capitalists." Moreover, the Bolsheviks denounced Kerensky's Provisional Government as a Government of capitalists "trying to enslave the people."

In March, the Soviets of workers' deputies (similar to the Soviet, or Council, of 1905) came into being in Petrograd and presently in other cities. The Bolsheviks rapidly gained growing numbers of seats in them. Moreover, army units stationed in Petrograd and the city's Red Guards of armed workers also leaned increasingly towards Lenin. In the midst of growing disorder, the Provisional Government was obeyed less and less.

In November, 1917, Lenin started an open revolt against the Provisional Government. Once more there was fighting at the barricades, shooting, red flags and blood in the streets. Only a few units fought for the Government. The Bolshevik Red Guards, sailors of the Baltic Fleet and soldiers stormed the Winter Palace,

which was the Government's seat. Kerensky and some of his ministers fled, others were arrested. In Moscow and many provincial cities the Bolsheviks also won, though against stronger resistance. Soon the bulk (but not all) of Russia was in their hands.

Shortly before it, the Constituent Assembly was elected. The Bolsheviks won only a little over one-third of the seats in it. The majority of seats went to moderate socialist parties. It proved that, despite the Bolsheviks' popularity in Petrograd, the bulk of the country did not want them. But that did not embarrass Lenin. No sooner did the Assembly convene than the Bolsheviks, now masters of the situation, disbanded it and arrested many of its non-Bolshevik members.

The Soviets henceforth became organs of Government through which the Communist Party ruled over Russia. Local city and village Soviets sent from time to time their representatives to a congress which elected a central Soviet. The latter had the authority to make, or sanction, laws and, in turn, elected peoples' commissars (secretaries or ministers) who governed the country. The Bolsheviks allowed only themselves, or workers and peasants supporting them, to be elected into the local and central Soviets. Thus, the dictatorship of the proletariat, or of the Communist Party, was established.

Shortly after the Bolshevik victory, the Soviet Government confiscated and "nationalized" all banks, banking accounts, mines, factories, industrial plants, houses, railroads, stores, corporations and landed estates (in reality, the latter had already been seized by peasants). In the turmoil of those months, the Russian army at the Russo-German front completely disintegrated. The front crumbled. Russia was utterly unable to continue the war, even if the Bolsheviks had wished to continue it. Hence, early in 1918, the Soviets concluded a peace with Germany and Austria-Hungary at

Brest-Litovsk, separately from Russia's allies. It provoked a great outburst of indignation in the United States, Britain and France.

The nationalization of capital by the Soviets threw Russia into even greater chaos than obtained under the Provisional Government. The rouble lost its value. Workers talked and fought more than they worked, and factories produced nothing. Peasants stopped selling foodstuffs to cities for the money which could not buy a thing. To feed the cities, the Soviets started forcibly requisitioning grain from them. And so, among dispossessed owners, political parties forcibly removed by the Bolsheviks from power, intellectual and better-off classes and a part of the peasantry, a strong movement against the Soviets began.

In the cities, fiery speeches were pronounced against the Bolsheviks. Clerks in Government offices "sabotaged" the Soviets. Terroristic acts were carried out against some of the Soviet leaders. Lenin himself was shot at by a woman—moderate socialist, Dora Kaplan—and seriously wounded. The Bolsheviks retaliated by a pitiless "red terror." Men of the better-off classes and of the socialist parties were arrested by the thousand as "hostages" and shot by the hundred whenever a Communist was attacked. Peasant risings, breaking out here and there, were also resolutely suppressed.

But at the end of 1918, an even stronger menace to the Soviets arose. The dissatisfied elements had long since flocked to the borders of Russia, where the Soviet power had never been strong. Among them, there were a great many army officers. Eventually, they organized whole anti-Soviet armies which became known as "White," in contrast to the Soviet "Red" army (red being the color of revolution). In Siberia, the Whites were headed by Admiral Kolchak, a talented naval officer. In the northern Caucasus, they were under the command of Generals Denikin and Baron Wrangel. There were also White forces in the Baltic area and

around Archangel. Presently, the civil wars started. The Whites' slogans were the continuation of war against Germany and the convocation of the Constituent Assembly. France, Britain and the United States, angered by the propaganda of the world revolution carried on by the Soviets and by the latter's separate peace with Germany, helped the Whites by sending war supplies. The French and the British sent even some army units to coöperate with Denikin and other White leaders. That was called Allied intervention.

The civil wars went on for well over two years, until the end of 1920. They were bloody and extremely embittered. Both sides often put prisoners to death. To be sure, on both sides there were some adventurers and men who fought for their selfish interests. But the tragedy lay in that the majority of both Reds and Whites sincerely believed in what they fought for and were willing to sacrifice their own lives for it. In 1919, the Whites seemed to stand on the verge of victory. Denikin's southern army occupied all of the Ukraine and reached out to within a hundred miles of Moscow. But the Whites refused to recognize the seizure of landed estates by peasants—they still insisted on waiting until the convocation of the Assembly. Worse still, some of the White commanders even reinstated the expelled landowners. The peasants, who, in many places, originally supported the Whites, turned away from them. Left without popular support, the Whites were defeated. Late in 1920, the last remnants of them surrendered or fled across Russia's borders.

At the same time, the Reds had other wars to fight. Between 1773 and 1863, the Russian czars committed a great injustice. Together with Prussia and Austria, they conquered and divided Poland. They not only took back from Poland the last remaining Russian lands, but also absorbed the purely Polish region around Warsaw. In 1918, after the Allied victory over Germany and

Austria, independent Poland was re-created. In 1920, war flared up between her and the Soviets. Exhausted by war against the Whites, the Red army lost to the Poles. Profiting by their victory, the Poles took from the Soviets some of the purely Russian provinces, for which Russia had struggled since the time of Ivan the Terrible. Lithuania, which had been absorbed into Russia together with Poland, also became independent. Moreover, the Esthonians and Latvians inhabiting part of the Baltic area, who in early centuries lived under Sweden and, after Peter the Great, became Russian subjects, now separated themselves from Russia. With the help of France and Britain, they formed little independent states. Finally, Finland, which Russia had won from Sweden in 1809, also fought the Soviets and proclaimed its independence.

When all of that mass of fighting was over, the Soviet Union was bled white, exhausted. On top of it all, a terrific famine broke out in the country ravaged by civil wars and requisitions and stricken by a drought in 1922. The disaster was so terrific that the United States went to the Russians' aid. The American Relief Administration, headed by Herbert Hoover, sent food to Russia and distributed it among the starving population. Despite that aid, about four million Russians starved to death.

In the midst of these upheavals and misfortunes, Lenin never flinched—even when the Soviet Union seemed to stand on the verge of collapse. And he was ready, all along, to pay any price in human lives and in material destruction for the final victory of the Communist Party. By the time of his death in 1924 it was obvious that that victory had been won.

Many years have elapsed since then. The first hectic period of revolution long since came to an end. Out of the turmoil of the

early revolutionary years, a greatly changed country—the Soviet Union as it stands today—has emerged.

After Lenin's death, there was a time when several Bolshevik leaders engaged in a bitter struggle for power. In the end, one of them—Joseph V. Stalin—won. He remained the unrivaled master of the Soviet Union until his death on March 5, 1953. His death was followed by various changes, from which a new leader emerged, a man named Nikita S. Khrushchev.

Stalin held the highest rank in the Soviet Army—that of generalissimo. Besides, he was premier of the Soviet Government, and they often referred to him as “leader.” But he was really even far more. He was Russia's dictator, just as Hitler had been Germany's and Mussolini Italy's. Stalin's authority was unlimited. No czar had ever wielded a power so great. It was an unwritten law for the Soviet press and radio to extol, nay, to deify Stalin as “the father of the peoples.” In reality he was feared and hated. He was ruthless and abnormally suspicious. He regarded all those who disagreed with him as traitors and destroyed them. Spying and denunciations by the ubiquitous agents of the Soviet Police (GPU, later known as MVD and MGB), leading to arrests and often to executions, became a mainstay of his rule. Withal, though claiming to have set up “the most progressive government in the world,” he strongly resembled the Oriental tyrants of bygone ages.

Stalin consolidated his power after a long and bitter struggle with other Communist leaders—Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin and others. In that struggle, both conflicting principles and rival ambitions were involved. Stalin sealed his victory by the so-called “party purges” or reprisals of 1936-39. Thousands of Communists suspected of being his secret enemies were accused of treason, espionage and other crimes, and shot or banished to

forced labor camps in Siberia. Among them were some of the highest ranking Soviet officials and army generals.

After Stalin's death in 1953 the control over the Communist Party, and, with it, over the Soviet Union passed at first to his main lieutenants, of which Khrushchev was but one, the others being Malenkov, Beria, Marshal Zhukov, Marshal Bulganin, etc. They pledged themselves to cooperate and to rule collectively. But harmony among them soon gave place to rivalry, just as had happened after Lenin's death.

First to be overthrown by his comrades, or rivals, and executed after a secret trial was Lavrenty Beria. He had long been, under Stalin, the dreaded chief of the Soviet Police. He was found guilty of having "plotted against the State" (in reality, against his rivals). Nor did matters rest there. By 1958, after a new series of dramatic plots and counter-plots, Khrushchev finally became the real master of the situation, the rest of his colleagues having been removed one by one.

At first with his colleagues and later alone, he followed a different line from Stalin's. Doubtless the system under which Russia lives remains fundamentally unchanged—it still is the authoritarian rule of the party boss (or bosses) exercised through that party and through the government. But where Stalin had acted by intimidation, terror and cruelty, Khrushchev revealed some humaneness and a real desire to satisfy some of the Russian people's most burning needs.

Under Khrushchev there have been none of the "purges" or mass executions of Stalin's day. Khrushchev has unequivocally condemned the arbitrary banishments and executions so common in Stalin's time, and is enforcing justice. Millions of real or imaginary "foes of the Soviet system," who had been confined under Stalin to concentration camps, were freed and these camps

abolished. Khrushchev has condemned, too, that leader's "cult of personality." An end has been put to the Russian's humiliating "attachment" to his job and place of residence; now a Soviet citizen is free to go to any city or region of his vast native land. Accordingly, Khrushchev's policy is often referred to as a policy of "de-Stalinization." Finally, he initiated economic measures which have considerably improved the Russians' lot. Thus, though the Soviet system as such remains undemocratic, Khrushchev has brought into it a modicum of respect for human rights and the intention to heed—at least in some matters—the will of the governed. There should be, however, no mistake: Khrushchev remains humane only as long as his own power, or the power of the Communist Party, is not threatened. In 1956, when a popular revolt against the Communist rule broke out in Hungary, he unhesitatingly sent the Soviet troops (stationed there since the end of World War II) to quell it with machine-guns, artillery fire and tanks, which caused an outburst of indignation in the entire Western world.

Let us take a look at the system under which the Russian people live today. The main feature of Soviet socialism lies in the fact that individuals, or groups of individuals, cannot own "means of production." You may own a home as long as you and your family alone live in it and do not draw profit from it by renting it. You may own money, Government bonds, a car, furniture, clothes, anything you need for your life. But you cannot own mines, factories, railways, apartment houses and other such profit-yielding property, or land. (If you wish to build a home, you can rent a plot for a very long term, but not buy it.) All such means of production are owned in theory by the entire people; in actual fact by the State.

Nor can the individual employ labor for profit-yielding pur-

poses. He can hire domestic help, but not workers who would produce goods for sale. That would be from the Communist viewpoint "capitalist exploitation," which is prohibited in the Soviet Union by law. Since all industries, railroads, etc., are State-owned, those employed in them, just as those who serve in Government offices or in the Army, receive salaries or wages from the Government. Every Soviet citizen enjoys "the right to work." This means that the Soviet Government, as owner of all industries, must provide a job for every man and woman who can work.

Peasants hold State-owned lands in permanent tenure. Most of them form "collective farms." This means that inhabitants of every (or almost every) village have pooled their land, livestock and other resources and work together. A collective farm's earnings are divided among its members according to the amount of work each has put in. Each collective farmer also has his own small "garden plot" where he raises vegetables, fruit, pigs, etc., for himself or for sale. The Government sells tractors and other agricultural machinery to the collective farms. Its agencies and the local Communist Party organizations tell the farmer just what, when and how to grow. And it is to the Government that the farmers must then sell most of their products at low "official" prices. The Government resells these products to city dwellers, or exports them. The money made by the Government in this way is one of the main sources of its income. It pays for Russia's armed forces, for the industrial development of the country, and so on.

In the years 1928-32, when collective farms were being formed, most of the peasants strongly opposed them. They felt that, once driven into those farms, they would cease to be free land tillers and become, instead, something like Government employees—or

serfs. And so, serious peasant riots broke out all over Russia, and were suppressed with much cruelty and bloodshed. Hundreds of thousands of peasant families were banished summarily to concentration camps. It was at such a price that "rural socialism" has been achieved in Soviet Russia.

The Communist Party has always attached paramount importance to the development of Russia's great natural resources. From 1928 on, the Soviet Government has carried out several "Five Year Plans" of industrial expansion, of construction of new industrial plants, mines, railroads, etc., which from 1959 on have given place to "Seven Year Plans," and the Soviet Union's economic progress has been swift and great.

Quite a few new industries have come into being. For instance, before 1917, Russia built but a few hundred cars per year. In 1957, about 500,000 of them, plus 200,000 tractors came off the assembly lines. The production of steel climbed from four million tons to 54 millions, that of oil from 70 million barrels to about 800 millions. Modern war, aviation, machine building and other industries were born. The development of great new coal, copper, oil, bauxite (aluminum) and various other deposits, which lay unscratched or barely scratched before, got under way. There is a rich new oil region between the Volga and the Urals known as *Second Baku*. The use of artificial fertilizers and extensive new irrigation methods have brought farming to regions formerly regarded as not fit for cultivation. More important still, it is known only too well that the Soviet Union has become one of the world's greatest producers of nuclear energy, both for military and peaceful purposes.

These achievements notwithstanding, the Soviet Union still lags behind the U.S. in the production of such items as steel, oil and the like, as well as in consumer goods. But the Soviet planners

have long since set for the country the goal of "catching up with the United States and leaving it behind," and they claim that that goal will be achieved in the near future.

Although the Soviets have not yet been nearly so successful in agriculture, it must be admitted that the Soviet Union's industrial progress has been spectacular. Yet, American and European observers draw our attention to the following facts:

First of all, they claim, these achievements have been secured at least as much by time as by Soviet socialism. The Russians are a gifted and hard-working people. Russia was already developing at a rapid tempo before the revolution. In these past 40-odd years, Russian industries would undoubtedly have grown as much (or more) under any economic system. Moreover, the Russian people have been called upon to pay too high a price for these achievements—in sweat, blood, tears, and human lives. For, inexperienced in industrial management, the Soviet Government made many mistakes, squandered valuable materials, built costly plants the wrong way. Then, by way of pinning the blame for its own blunders on others, it accused groups of Russian engineers of deliberate sabotage and had them condemned to death. Besides, despite the growth of her industrial production, the Soviet Union remained without consumer goods, such as clothes, shoes, furniture, kitchen utensils. It is these things that make human life comfortable. Yet, instead of producing them, Soviet plants produced chiefly machinery, locomotives, rails, armaments, tanks and guns—things which one cannot wear or use.

And there is much dire poverty, much human suffering in the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, the top Communist leaders live in luxury which many an American or British "capitalist" might well envy. Withal, so far the Communist Party has failed to achieve the avowed main aim of its early philosophers and creators

—Karl Marx, Lenin and the others—that of establishing economic equality among men. Instead, it has bred the most clashing form of inequality. The upper layer of the population is formed by technical experts, scientists, and especially of Communist Party leaders and the higher Soviet Government officials. They live far better than the rest of the population.

In its present form, as an economic system, Soviet socialism may seem to present certain advantages. Being the sole owner of all of Russia's industrial plants and natural resources, the Soviet Government can make and carry out momentous decisions quicker and with greater vigor than the government of a democratic nation like ours, where the rights of the private owners and of the community are to be considered and lengthy legal procedures followed. But that advantage is more than offset by important disadvantages. For one thing, the implementation of such decisions is stupendously expensive and wasteful—wasteful in money, labor, human suffering and even human lives. Besides, by making virtually all men "government employees," the Soviet socialism weakens both their incentive to accomplish things economically and their individual creative initiative. And these two factors, to which the Western democracies owe their prosperity, have always been the mainsprings of economic progress.

All the various races which inhabit Russia are equal. In the Soviet Union each large racial group is now a separate "union republic." Such is the Russian Republic, (which occupies most of European Russia and Siberia) and the Ukrainian, White Russian, Georgian, Armenian, Tadshyk, Kazakh and other republics. Smaller races living within the union republics, such as the Kazan Tartars, form "autonomous republics" and "areas." Within its republic, each race uses its own language in schools, publishes

books and newspapers in that language and has its own theater.

All Soviets, including the Supreme Soviet of the Union, which has the same functions as our Congress, are elected by the universal ballot system. But the following fact of great importance must be kept in mind. There still exists but one political party—the ruling Communist Party—in the entire Soviet Union. And the Communists allow no other party to come into existence.

This means that, unlike the United States, the Soviet Union is not a democracy. Political freedom is, above all, freedom of choice. If the American people are not satisfied with their Government, they are free to vote at the polls for the candidates of another political party. But with only one party, the Communist Party, in the Soviet Union, the Russian people have no choice. They can vote only for the “single list” of Communist candidates, or for so-called “no-party men” approved by the Communists. In other words, a Communist victory is always guaranteed. Of course, all key positions in the Soviet administration are also held by Communists.

These facts show that the Russian people live under what is really the dictatorship of the Communist Party. Indeed, the Russian's entire life and work are dependent on that party.

Until 1953-4 his personal freedom was not defended by the law, as is that of an American citizen. Moreover, until recently, no matter whether he was an engineer, a workman or a peasant, he was “attached” to his factory or collective farm, that is to say, could not leave it and seek employment elsewhere without permission from the authorities. The Soviet workman—and that, too, is important—cannot go on strike for higher wages or other benefits. For all industry in the Soviet Union being Government-owned, striking is regarded as an offense against the State. The Russian still enjoys no freedom of thought or expression either.

For the Soviet press, literature, radio, cinema and educational system are all in the hands of the Communists. The public is allowed to read or to hear only what the Party wants it to read or to hear.

Nor are the Soviet citizen's children always free in the choice of a profession. If, for example, there is a special need for bricklayers and miners, the Soviet authorities can, directly or indirectly, force the required number of children to take training in these trades—even if these children really wanted to become doctors or architects. Finally, the Soviet citizen is completely dependent economically on the Communist-run State, for both industry and agriculture are Government-controlled.

The life of the average Russian is not easy even now. He earns much less than an average American. Indeed, while in 1959 in the U.S. an average industrial workman could buy a suit of clothes with three days' wages, an average Soviet worker had to work *six weeks* in order to pay for such a suit. An average American worked four to five hours for a pair of leather shoes or for a simple rayon dress for his wife; a Russian had to work for these articles seven and four days, respectively. Small wonder that Moscow crowds look a bit shabby. The Muscovite usually wears no tie and a baggy, shapeless suit which has hardly ever been pressed. It goes without saying that automobiles are accessible in Russia only to the men belonging to the uppermost layer of society, but not to the workingmen or peasants.

At the GUM, Moscow's great department store, you will find a much larger selection of merchandise than in former years, including such items as hosiery (formerly scarce), vacuum cleaners and (excellent) cameras. Yet, that improvement notwithstanding, there are not as yet nearly enough goods to go around and, for the most part, they are of mediocre quality. Perhaps the only mer-

chandise that is really plentiful and quite cheap is books. Books of every description, from works of classical literature and manuals of chess, to political propaganda and courses of nuclear physics, are published by the Soviets in immense quantities. For Russians are voracious readers.

The philosophy of the Communist Party still remains, as it always has been, strictly materialistic and atheistic, and Communists still continue to frown at religion. But they had already discontinued under Stalin the barbarous persecutions of the church which they had carried out in the first stages of the Soviet rule (1918-1939). For it proved to be *impossible* to eradicate religion from Russia's soil. Comparatively few churches are open (a majority were closed by Communists in the early years) but during their services they are filled to capacity. Those of the Russians who have preserved the faiths of their forefathers can now worship without much trouble from the Communist authorities.

The Russians are a tough, patient, gifted, hard-working and peace-loving people. Like ourselves they love sports. In 1958 there were 198,000 registered sports societies in the Soviet Union, with a total attendance of 22,000,000 men and women. The most popular game in Russia is European football (soccer); light athletics and skiing and skating come next. Many a Russian spends his evenings over the chessboard; as early as the seventeenth century European visitors noted that the Russians were excellent chess players. The average Soviet citizen's earnings may be low, but he does get certain benefits from the Government. For example, in summertime he can go for a vacation to a "rest home," many of which are the houses or estates of former wealthy private owners, at one of the seashore resorts of the Crimea or the Caucasus, either free or for a very low price.

The Soviet Government is making earnest efforts to bring up

the new generations so that they will be physically fit, loyal to the Soviet régime, and will make competent workers, engineers and officials. Hence that Government attaches a very special importance to *education*—especially technical and scientific education. No expense has been spared in setting up all sorts of educational institutions, from kindergartens to universities and various specialized institutes of higher learning and of supplying them with the finest modern equipment.

Russian youngsters certainly are not pampered. They work hard. They go to school six days a week, ten months a year. The curriculum is large, and the school discipline strict. Nor can one skip such "difficult" subjects as algebra or geometry—they are compulsory. And in order to make the grade one must actually *know* one's subjects. Let it be noted that an average Russian youngster is eager to learn, but not just because he is naturally inquisitive. What may matter even more is that, there being virtually no private industry in Russia, education is the *only* way of bettering one's lot.

Qualified Western observers tell us that the Soviet educational effort has yielded important results. For one thing, illiteracy is said to have been almost completely wiped out in their country. But more important still is this fact: it is the most gifted and ambitious of the graduates of secondary schools who get all the breaks—such as relatively high scholarships, etc.—for admission to the 750-odd Soviet institutions of higher learning. And these institutions yearly turn out some 350,000 qualified specialists and scientists of all descriptions—engineers, biologists, chemists, atomic physicists, aeronautical experts, doctors and the like—that is to say, more than perhaps any other country.

And Soviet scientists know how to achieve results. The Russians were the first ones to have launched, in October and November

of 1957, the two "sputniks" (that being the Russian word for "satellite"), the first to land a missile on the moon (1959), and the first to have successfully performed some daring and extremely complicated surgical operations. All of which leads some of our thinkers to believe that the Russians have become serious competitors of the Western world in technology and science—and that we, including especially the young people in our growing generation, must work hard in order not to lose our lead in these fields.

During most of the revolutionary epoch, relations between the Soviets and many of the Western powers have been bad, and at times even critical. You will remember that Marx and Lenin believed that the communist philosophy of socialism would eventually triumph over capitalism *in the entire world*. Communists felt (and perhaps still do) that this must be accomplished through a "world revolution," that is to say, through the uprising of the workers of every nation of the world against the moneyed classes and the existing governments.

Accordingly, from 1917 on, though the Soviet Government entered into polite diplomatic relations with the "bourgeois" régimes, the Communists openly advocated their overthrow—even, if need be, against the will of the majority. Moreover, they helped Communist parties to come into being, or to gain strength, in most countries of the world from Norway and India to Spain, the United States and Australia. These parties carried on propaganda, instigated revolutionary outbreaks and engaged in other overt and secret subversive activities in their respective lands.

These facts by themselves accounted for a great many serious misunderstandings between the Soviet Government and the governments of the Western nations. But that was not all. As you know, the Soviet Union was our ally in the war against Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and (in the last stage of it) Japan. The Russian

people needed then—and received—our help in armaments, war materials and machinery. At that time the Soviet Government gave formal pledges that it would restore freedom and democracy to the peoples of Eastern Europe and other parts of the world, which the Soviet troops would liberate from Germany. But, after the war was won, the Soviet Government did not keep its pledged word.

Profiting, in 1945-6, by the post-war occupation of Eastern Europe by the Soviet Army, Stalin's government—through a combination of violence, deceit and misinterpretation of international agreements—set up “puppet” Communist régimes in Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, etc., and, also, in Eastern Germany. Thus, populations aggregating 110 millions were subjugated, against their will, to communism.

Moreover, the Soviets have instigated or assisted some acts of open Communist aggression in Asia, such as those in Korea and in Indo-China. Moscow supported the aggressors diplomatically and generously helped them with armaments, war materials, etc.

These factors have prompted the United States, Britain, France and other great powers of the West to take a series of *defensive* measures. The objective has been not only to provide for the actual self-defense of these powers—or for the defense of other free nations—from the possible recurrence of the Communist aggression, but also, and chiefly, to *discourage* its recurrence.

During these years, the Communist and Western camps, armed with the mightiest weapons of destruction—the A- and H-bombs, the long-range bombers, the ballistic missiles with nuclear war-heads—confronted each other with mistrust and fear. Both the Soviets and the Western powers realize that an end must be put to the so-called “cold war” and to the international armament race. Some sort of coexistence between the two worlds must be

worked out. And there is no reason why such a coexistence should not be achieved. In the past few years the Soviet Government has gradually begun to reflect—to some extent—the real wishes of the Russian people. Some observers believe that the further this process of the “democratization” of the Soviet Government continues, the friendlier the Soviet’s relations with the Western world will become.

For there is hardly any room for doubt that the Russian people want no war. They know what war is like probably better than any other nation. Indeed, according to some estimates, the losses sustained by Russia in World War II amounted to about 15 million human lives. The Russians realize that a new war, waged with nuclear weapons, would be infinitely more terrible than the last one. And they hope through friendship and understanding among all nations, to achieve lasting world peace. In that, the Russians do not differ from the Americans, the Germans, the Spanish, the Malaysians—all sane men on earth share that same hope.

Index

- Agriculture, 20-21, 44-45, 62, 64, 133, 151-153
- Alexander I, 124-126
- Alexander II, 129-130, 134-137
- Alexander III, 118, 137, 139
- Alupka, 49
- Anastasia, 95
- Animals, 9, 13, 52, 61-63
- Archangel, 43, 99
- Architecture, 25-26, 36
- Arctic, the, 10-11, 43-44
- Art, 39, 65, 79-80, 105, 119
- Ashkhabad, 62-63
- Astrakhan, 21, 92
- Aul, 53, 55-56
- Aviation, 16, 43
- Azerbaidjan, 58-59
- Baku, 58, 59
- Baltic Sea, 29, 36, 37, 70, 99, 116
- Batu, 85-86
- Batumi, 57-58
- Beria, Lavrenty, 149
- Black Sea, 37, 44, 49, 51, 57, 72, 116
- Bolshevik Party (See Communist Party)
- Boris Godunov, 102
- Boyars, Council of, 81, 96, 112
- Brest-Litovsk, Treaty of, 144-145
- Bulganin, Nikolai, 149
- Byzantium (See Constantinople)
- Carpathian Mts., 68, 83
- Caspian Sea, 20, 29, 51, 58, 59, 61
- Cathedral of St. Sophia, Kiev, 46-47, 77, 80
- Catherine the Great, 39, 50-51, 117-119, 123
- Caucasian Mts., 52-54, 57
- Caucasus, 21, 51-59, 62
- Central Asia, 59-66
- Central Russia, 41-44, 84
- Chelyabinsk, 19
- Christianity, 77-80, 93-94
- Churches, 26-32, 46-47, 63, 79-80
- Cities, 11, 15-18, 47 (See also individual cities)
- Climate, 41, 57
- Coal, 17, 45, 65
- Communes, 130
- Communist or Bolshevik Party, 142-145, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 154
- Constantinople, 37, 50, 77-78, 80, 93
- Cossacks, 52, 53, 100-103, 122
- Cotton, 62, 64, 66, 131
- Crimea, 48-51, 92
- Crimean War, 128-129
- Cumans, 82-85
- Czars, 15, 30-31, 38, 87-104, 136
- Desert of Central Asia, 60-61
- Dimitry, Grand Duke, 89-91
- Dnieper River, 28, 47, 71
- Don River, 28
- Donets Basin, 45, 47
- Dostoevsky, 119
- Duma, The, 138-140
- Education, 111, 131-133, 158
- Electric Power, 44, 46, 59, 66
- Emperors, The, 39, 105-140
- Estonia, 147
- Far East, 10, 13, 43
- Farming, Collective, 148-149
- Finland, 88, 147
- Fisheries, 9, 20-21
- Five Year Plan, 152
- Forests, 10-17, 44, 52
- Georgia, 56-58
- Georgian Highway, 52-53
- Germans, 22-23, 39-40, 47, 88, 99, 139
- Genghis Khan, 64, 84-85
- Gogol, 119

- Golden Horde, 87, 89, 92
 Gorky, Maxim, 103
 Government, 17, 28, 69, 97, 112, 131-140, 141-161
 Great Reform, 130-131
 Hermitage, The, 38
 Hungary, 150
 Icons, 79-80
 Igor, 74-75, 77
 Industry, 16, 18, 23, 45, 66, 113, 131, 133, 153-154
 Irrigation, 62, 65
 Istanbul (See Constantinople)
 Ivan III, 91-92
 Ivan IV, The Terrible, 31-33, 93-98, 107
 Kerensky, Alexander, 141, 143, 144
 Kiev, 43-48, 69, 73, 76, 77, 78, 80, 81, 82, 83, 100
 Kirghiz, 64-65
 Krasnovadsk, 59-60
 Kremlin, The, 30-33, 94
 Khrushchev, Nikita S., 148, 149, 150
 Kuban River, 51
 Kuchkovo, 28-29
 Kuibyshev, 19-21, 44
 Lake Baikal, 17
 Lavra Monastery, 47
 Latvia, 147
 Lena River, 17
 Lenin, Vladimir, 33, 142-143, 145, 159
 Leningrad, 35-42
 Literature, 119
 Lithuania, 88, 91, 96, 99, 100, 147
 Magnitogorsk, 19
 Malenkov, Georgi, 149
 Mamay, 89-90
 Manganese, 45, 59
 Marx, Karl, 142, 159
 May Day, 34
 Metal production, 131
 Minerals, 16, 17, 18, 19, 43, 45, 59, 65
 Mongolian Republic, 17
 Mongols, 15, 22, 64, 84-86
 Moscow, 24, 25-35, 41, 84, 86, 88-91, 125
Moscow News, The, 112-113
 Moskva River, 28, 29, 30
 Moussorgsky, 119
 Muscovia, 30, 50, 92, 97-99, 101, 105-106, 121
 Napoleon, 124-125, 129
 Nekrasov, 129
 Neva River, 35
 Nicholas I, 126, 129, 136
 Nicholas II, 137-141
 Novgorod, 69-74, 76
 Novorossiysk, 51
 Novosibirsk, 11, 16, 18, 66
 Ob River, 17
 Odessa, 48
 Oil, 20-21, 43, 58, 65, 152
 Oleg, 73-76
 Olga, 74, 75
 Pamir Plateau, 62, 64, 66
 Paul I, 124
 Peasant revolts, 123, 152
 Peasants, 15, 37, 45, 120-124, 127, 130-133, 137, 151-152
 Peter the Great, 35-41, 100, 108-117, 120
 Poland, 44, 100, 106, 114, 146-147
 Population, 24, 67, 132
 Preobrazhenskoye, 108-109, 114
 Provisional Government, 141, 143, 145
 Pugachyov, 123
 Pushkin, Alexander, 119
 Racial types, 15, 45, 53-54
 Railroads, 11, 16, 17, 27, 60, 131
 Red Square, 32-35, 95
 Religion, 54, 57, 63, 107
 Revolution, 132, 135, 137-138, 140
 Revolution of 1917, 26, 33, 39, 46, 49, 104, 141, 143, 146
 Rimsky-Korsakov, Nikolai, 119
 Rivers, 12, 19-20, 28-29, 61 (See also individual rivers)
 Romanovs, 103-104, 105-140
 Rus, 72
 Russian Church, 87-88
 Russians, 67-86
 Russo-Japanese War, 137-138
 Ryurik, 72-74

- St. Basil, Church of, 32-33
 St. Petersburg (Petersburg or Petrograd), 35-38, 116-117 (*See also* Leningrad)
 Samarkand, 63-66, 84
 Serfdom, 122-132
 Sevastopol, 49, 128
 Siberia, 10-24, 43, 125, 133
 Slavs, 68-70
 Sobor, The, 94, 96, 103
 "Song of the Volga Boatmen," 20, 24, 28
 Soviet Army, 22, 102
 Soviet Government, 16-18, 32, 39, 46, 59, 144, 148-157
 Soviet, The, 138, 141-146, 150
 Soviet Union, 9, 19, 27, 33, 67, 147-157
 Sports, 42
 Stalin, Joseph V., 148, 149
 Stalingrad, 22-23
 Stalinsk, 17
 Steppes, 18, 52, 56, 60, 76
 Suzdal, 28, 83, 86
 Sweden, 37, 100, 106, 113-117, 147
 Taiga, 10-18, 66
 Tamerlane, 64
 Tartars, 22, 49-51, 64, 67, 84, 86-92, 98, 101, 105
 Tashkent, 66
 Tbilisi (or Tiflis), 56-57
 Tchaikovsky, Peter, 119
 Tolstoy, Leo, 119
 Trade, 29, 33, 76
 Trade routes, 20, 28-30, 70-72, 99
 Transcaucasia, 55-58
 Transportation, 42, 61
 Troika, 42
 Trotsky, Leon, 148
 Tundra, 11, 43
 Turgenev, Ivan, 119, 129
 Turkestan, 59
 Turkey, 44, 49-50, 92, 116
 Ukraine, 44-48, 67, 115
 Ural Mts., 18-19
 Varangians, 69, 71, 72
 Vikings, 70, 72
 Vladimir, 78, 80, 86, 88-89
 Vladivostok, 9-10, 17, 43, 67
 Volga River, 19-24, 58
 White Russia, 67, 145-146
 Winter Palace, 38-39, 136, 143
 Women, 63, 106, 111
 World War I, 139
 World War II, 39-40, 153, 159-160
 Yaila Mts., 48-49
 Yakutsk, 18
 Yalta, 48, 51
 Yaroslav, 80-82
 Yenisey River, 17
 Yury, Prince, 28-29, 83, 86
 Zaporozhye Dam, 46-47, 70
 Zhukov, Georgi, 149

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